

Government raises fuel prices

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Supply announced Saturday that the prices of some fuel, including diesel oil used for heating homes, will be raised effective today. In a statement released late Saturday, officials said the price of a litre of first grade gasoline will cost 300 fils, an increase of about 11 per cent, a litre of diesel oil 105 fils, an increase of about 40 per cent, and a tonne of fuel oil for industry JD 65, an increase of about 35 per cent. However, the statement said, fuel oil sold for electricity will continue to sell for JD 41. The decision, taken in accordance with a Council of Ministers decision, also said that households whose monthly income does not exceed JD 300 per month will receive JD 100 from the government during 1992. The move also raised by 6 per cent the trucking rates charged by all diesel-run trucks to help support the transport sector as it recovers from the Gulf war that damaged every aspect of the economy.

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U.N. envoy in Libya on Lockerbie case

TRIPOLI (R) — A U.N. envoy arrived in Tripoli on Saturday with a message asking Libya to explain its position in a dispute with Western countries over air-traffic bombings in 1988 and 1989. Officials said Vasily Safonchuk, the U.N. under-secretary general for Security Council affairs, went into discussions with unnamed Libyan officials shortly after his arrival. U.N. sources in Tripoli said Mr. Safonchuk had a letter from Secretary-General Boutros Ghali asking Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi to provide further clarification of previous Libyan proposals to solve the controversy.

Iran, Iraq to swap remaining POWs

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran and Iraq have agreed to exchange remaining prisoners of war (PoWs) from their 1980-88 conflict, Tehran Radio reported Saturday. The broadcast, monitored in Nicosia, said a bilateral agreement calling for the swap was signed by the two countries and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which has coordinated exchanges in the past. It did not say when the swap would begin. Iran and Iraq exchanged some 38,000 PoWs in August and September 1990. But both sides claim that thousands more are held by both sides. The ICRC has said it believes that 5,000 prisoners from both countries are still languishing in PoW camps. The radio said the agreement also calls on Iran and Iraq to exchange complete lists of those missing in action, and information relating to them.

Mitterrand is still unpopular

PARIS (R) — Nearly two-thirds of the French people are unhappy with President Francois Mitterrand's performance, an opinion poll published on Saturday said. The poll in the weekly newspaper "Journal du Dimanche" said 63 per cent of voters were dissatisfied with Mr. Mitterrand, whose popularity has plummeted due to rising unemployment and controversy over immigration from Third World countries. The figure was unchanged from last month, but the number of people satisfied with him dropped from 26 per cent to 24 per cent while those undecided rose from 11 per cent to 13 per cent. A separate poll published on Thursday said 58 per cent of voters thought Mr. Mitterrand, whose mandate runs out in 1995, should step down earlier if his Socialist Party did badly in regional elections next month. Polls suggest the Socialists, who are also undermined by scandals over party funding, may lose the March 22 elections disastrously.

Israeli 'spy' tests negative for Aids

CAIRO (AP) — A senior government physician said Saturday tests showed that an Israeli teenager held on suspicion of spying is not infected with the AIDS virus. Cairo newspapers have reported widely that Faika Misrati, arrested with her father, is infected with the fatal virus and was being kept in solitary confinement at a women's prison to prevent its spread to other prisoners. Dr. Sobhi Abdul Rahim, the health ministry's first under-secretary, told reporters Saturday the ministry performed tests on Miss Misrati's blood, at its main laboratory. "They proved that Faika Subhi Misrati does not have acquired immune deficiency syndrome," he told reporters. Prosecutors requested the tests during investigations of Miss Misrati, her father Subhi Misrati, her brother Majid and a family friend, David Orit. All are held on suspicion of spying. Police arrested the four Israelis at different times this month. The Libyan-born senior Misrati and his daughter were seized at an apartment in a Cairo suburb.

Prince Saud visits Tajikistan

RIYADH (AP) — Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal was visiting Tajikistan Saturday as part of a diplomatic offensive to foster the kingdom's links with the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union.

Peace negotiators head for Washington

Delegates hope for focus on settlements and human rights

AMMAN (Agencies) — Jordanian and Palestinian negotiators left for Washington Saturday to take part in a new round of Middle East peace talks opening next week.

Hanan Ashrawi, the Palestinians' spokeswoman, said her team will demand a halt in Jewish settlement activities in the occupied territories before entering into substantial negotiations on interim self-rule arrangements for Palestinians.

"The cessation of settlements is a prerequisite for the success of negotiations," Dr. Ashrawi told reporters before boarding the New York-bound Royal Jordanian flight.

Both the United States and Israel insist that the peace talks should focus on interim self-government arrangements for the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

But Dr. Ashrawi said that "in order to start serious work on the transitional phase and on the agenda items, we have to resolve two basic issues: Settlements and human rights violations."

The bilateral meetings between Israel and each of the Syrian, Lebanese, Jordanian and Palestinian teams open Monday. It is the fourth round of face-to-face talks since the Middle East peace talks were launched in Madrid, Spain, in October.

"We are going against a background of Israeli escalation, violence, settlement activity and Israeli political discord," Dr. Ashrawi told Jordan Television before the departure.

"Israel has to prove its intention... if it is seriously interested in the peace process and will comply with the principles of peace or if it is just buying time trying to pretend that it is part of

the process while doing everything to destroy it," she said.

Earlier in the day, the Jordanian and Palestinian delegates were received by Foreign Minister Abu Jaber.

Dr. Abu Jaber said the meeting was held to exchange views on steps to be followed in the negotiations and to reach agreement on some basic issues such as the agenda, the negotiating process, coordination of stands and future meetings between the two sides.

He said Jordanian and Arab negotiators to the peace talks will discuss with the Israeli delegation the implementation of international legitimacy and the United Nations Resolutions, particularly resolutions 242 and 338 which call for exchanging land for peace and Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and giving the Palestinians the right to determine their future on their land.

Concerning Lebanon, he said, the talks should take place on the basis of resolution 425, which calls for full and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon.

The foreign minister described the recent Israeli incursion into Lebanon as very serious issue, particularly that it came on the eve of the start of the talks. He said that this aggression will influence the Israeli-Lebanese talks.

"How could the talks take place in such an atmosphere?" he asked.

Arab peace delegates hope the talks will make some progress on issues of substance now that the procedural wrangling that clouded the first rounds of talks has been settled.

But many believe that little progress will be possible before Israeli elections in June.

The Palestinian delegates are also angry that Israel has prevented four of their assistants from going to Washington.

Dr. Ashrawi said the Israeli incursion into South Lebanon on Thursday would primarily concern the Lebanese delegation but other Arab teams would raise the matter as a violation of the basis of the peace talks.

"It is not a question of turning it into a negotiating point. It is a question of incursion becoming an active and effective attitude that will sabotage the peace process because they negate its very foundations," she said at Amman airport.

Israeli troops pushed into villages north of their self-declared security zone in South Lebanon on Thursday to try to end Katyusha attacks, but the thrust, in which two Israeli soldiers were killed, proved ineffective.

"We think the shadow of the elections in Israel will be clear on the negotiations," said Palestinian delegate Ghassan Al Khatib, reflecting a common Arab view that the Israeli team will not be in a position to take any clear decisions.

On human rights, Israel has been widely criticised for its handling of Arab resistance against occupation, including expelling Palestinian activists, mass arrests and lengthy detention of Arabs without trial. The arrest of two negotiators had threatened to obstruct the talks earlier this week.

The Palestinian team crossed into Jordan Thursday and held talks with Jordanian negotiators and government officials before leaving.

On Friday, the Palestinian

(Continued on page 5)

New polio immunisation drive begins in Jordan tomorrow

By Khalil Abdul Salam
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan has 32 officially recorded polio cases among its children, and 22 of these cases are in the central and northern parts of the Jordan Valley region, and the health ministry is launching a nation-wide campaign to ensure immunisation against the disease.

Health Minister Aref Al Bataineh said Saturday that three of the cases were in Ajloun, two each in Irbid, Amman and Kura district and one in Ijdaita district in the Irbid region.

"It is regrettable that 50 per cent of the 32 cases were of children who had already received the anti-polio vaccine," the minister told a press conference Saturday.

He said that the Health Ministry had already prepared 200,000 doses of vaccine sufficient for 600,000 children and the campaign will include those who have already received the shots, the minister said.

As soon as cases of polio were reported last December in the Jordan Valley region, the Health Ministry embarked on immediate measures to contain the disease, Dr. Bataineh said.

He said that the Health Ministry had carried out a vaccination campaign in the Jordan Valley employing four specialised teams to do the job. He said samples of blood taken by Jordan's laboratories from infected children were sent to the Netherlands to shed more light on polio virus and the result were duly received.

Dr. Bataineh said that the Health Ministry contacted WHO and health authorities in the U.S. both of which provided Jordan with experts to deal with the disease.

The sinister aspect of polio, the minister noted, is the fact that for every polio case discovered there is the possibility of 100 to 300 carrier cases, a dangerous situation in view of the fact that the carriers of the disease can inadvertently infect other children.

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The Health Ministry is now closely cooperating with the private health sector in Jordan, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other agencies to launch a national campaign starting Monday to ensure the inoculation of all children under five years of age; Dr. Bataineh said.

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A worker repairs the roof of a bus station at an Israeli settlement which was hit by Katyusha rockets

Hizbollah, Amal halt rocket attacks on Israeli targets

KAFRA, Lebanon (Agencies) — Lebanese guerrillas called off their rocket war on Israel on Saturday and withdrew from front-line areas in South Lebanon.

The decision, taken to avert further retaliation threatened by Israel, checked spiralling violence that gripped the border area for six days after Israeli helicopters killed a fundamentalist leader.

The pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God) and the Amal movement agreed to halt rocket attacks on Israel and an Israeli-controlled buffer strip in talks in the southern port of Sidon.

The order took effect at 4 p.m. (1400 GMT). Security sources said two hours later that no rockets had been fired since then.

Guerrilla representatives at the Sidon talks with Syrian and Lebanese army officers agreed to pull back fighters who flooded the south to oppose a tank-led Israeli thrust out of the "security zone" on Thursday, the sources said.

Shortly after the deadline scores of Hizbollah and Amal fighters left the battle-scarred villages of Kafra and Yater, which they had reoccupied when Israeli troops pulled out on Friday after a 24-hour search for rocket bases.

Others who live in the area hid their weapons and changed from military to civilian clothes. Residents said they were sleeping or washing.

Security sources said the Sidon meeting agreed guerrillas would not appear in public with weapons in the area patrolled by UNIFIL, a U.N. peacekeeping force brushed aside in Thursday's Israeli attack.

Guerrillas fired more than 120 Katyusha rockets into Israel and the "security zone" in the last six days to avenge the killing of Sheikh Abbas Musawi, Hizbollah's secretary-general, in a helicopter ambush.

Rocket attacks on Israel stopped after a girl was killed in western Galilee on Friday — the first Israeli to die in a rocket attack since Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982.

U.N. sources said no rockets were fired into Israel on Saturday but more than 10 Katyushas hit the "security zone" before the 4 p.m. deadline.

Israeli army chief Ehud Barak vowed before the pullback his troops would do what it took to stop guerrilla attacks.

"The army will continue to do all it can to halt this wave of Katyushas and ensure that anyone who tried to hit Israel and its citizens, especially in this area, will pay a very high price," Lieutenant-General Barak told Israeli Radio.

It is believed to be the first time that Sheikh Hakim has visited Saudi Arabia, which has supported rival Iraqi exile groups.

That could mark a breakthrough in efforts in bringing together the disparate movements to forge a cohesive and united front against the Saddam government.

Sheikh Hakim said the leaders of other Iraqi opposition groups will soon arrive in Riyadh for talks with anti-Saddam groups based in Saudi Arabia.

He said he will meet leaders of these groups as well as King Fahd and other Saudi officials, IRNA reported.

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Scheer says he rejected top job

PARIS (R) — A former French official sacked after Palestinian leader George Habash's visit to Paris said on Saturday he had refused the post of ambassador to Germany. Francois Scheer, forced to resign as foreign ministry secretary-general for agreeing to Dr. Habash's admission for medical treatment last month, told the "Journal du Dimanche" newspaper that German authorities had probably welcomed his decision. "I think the Germans would have been upset to have to receive someone sacked from his last job," Mr. Scheer said. Dr. Habash, head of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, left Paris after a political furor that hurt the government at home and abroad, particularly in the Middle East. Mr. Scheer's interview followed reports that he had written a letter to ministry personnel and French embassies abroad denying wrongdoing in the Habash case. While confirming he wrote the letter, Mr. Scheer told the newspaper: "I do not regret anything. But I did not say that I made a mistake nor did I say I did not make a mistake." Three other top government officials and the head of the French Red Cross were forced to resign for giving prior approval to Dr. Habash's stay. President Francois Mitterrand said afterwards they were guilty of "errors of judgement."

No accord on Israeli loan bid as Democrats assail settlement policy

By Rania Attalla
Special to the Jordan Times

WASHINGTON — While the meeting between U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Israel's Ambassador to Washington Zelman Shoval Friday afternoon produced no agreement on Israel's \$10 billion loan guarantee request, some key lawmakers in the U.S. Congress criticised Israel's settlement policy, expressing strong reservation about Washington's granting the guarantees in view of such policy.

Friday's was the third meeting between Mr. Baker and Mr. Shoval on Israel's loan guarantee request. Observers believe that the issue is likely to be settled behind the scenes between the administration and the Israeli government, avoiding full congressional involvement in the debate on the issue even though Congress will ultimately have to approve the guarantees. The significance of the criticism of Israel by key Democrat lawmakers lies in that they chair the crucial committees which are in charge of appropriating U.S. foreign assistance.

Patrick Leahy, an influential senator and chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, said following a meeting he had with Mr. Baker Friday that if the administration and the government of Israel do not reach an agreement over the issue in the next few days, he would probably propose legislation imposing severe limits on Israel's ability to use any U.S. guarantees if it continues to build settlements in the occupied territories.

The senator said Friday he was considering a foreign aid appropriations bill that would contain

Jordan lauds U.S. stand

FOREIGN Minister Kamel Abu Jaber said in Amman Saturday he welcomed U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's tough conditions for guaranteeing loans to Israel worth \$10 billion.

"We think this stand will be a help in the peace process in the sense that it should act as a sobering factor to the Israelis, who seem to be intent on putting obstacles in the path of peace," Dr. Abu Jaber told Reuters Saturday.

conditions Israel would have to meet in order to obtain the loan guarantees. Such a formula would not only apply a tough dollar-for-dollar accounting and deduction for any Israeli construction activity in the occupied territories since Jan. 1, 1992, but would also forbid direct or indirect use of U.S. funds for settlements. It would also make all U.S. loan guarantees subject to cancellation if Israel starts any new construction.

Mr. Leahy's statement demonstrated a definite toughening of his earlier position when he proposed a formula that would deduct dollar for dollar from the U.S. loan guarantee the amount of money Israel spends in the occupied territories. What floated around Washington earlier this year and became known as the "Leahy formula of deductibility" was subsequently determined by the administration as not being tough enough vis-a-vis Israel's

(Continued on page 5)

Israelis shoot and wound 6 Palestinians

OCCUPIED GAZA (Agencies) — Israeli soldiers shot and wounded six Palestinians during clashes with stone-throwing demonstrators in the occupied Gaza Strip on Saturday, hospital officials said.

A seventh man was beaten by soldiers after young men stoned troops stationed on a building in the Khan Yunis refugee camp.

An Israeli army spokesman said he was checking the report. Palestinian youths have been protesting the killing by an undercover Israeli unit of an activist who was long sought by the army for allegedly killing suspected Palestinian informers.

Israeli soldiers shot and wounded at least three Palestinians with rubber bullets during clashes on Friday night, military sources said. A fourth man was wounded by armed Arabs, they said.

Israeli troops also dispersed about 100 demonstrators marching in Gaza City to mark the 23rd anniversary of the founding of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, residents said. Two youths were arrested.

"This heroic operation came as an initial reaction to the killing of the Mujahed Abbas Musawi," The Islamic Jihad in Palestine has strong ties to Hizbollah in Lebanon.

On Friday a Palestinian man stabbed a woman to death and wounded three other Russian immigrants in central Israel on Friday and fundamentalists claimed the attack as revenge for Israel's killing of a pro-Iranian leader.

Police said two men and two women, all Russians, were attacked as they left a grocery shop in Kfar Saba, northeast of Tel Aviv.

The fundamentalist Islamic Jihad in Palestine group circulated a leaflet saying it carried out the stabbings in retaliation for Israel's killing last Sunday of the leader of Lebanon's Hizbollah (Party of God), Sheikh Abbas Musawi.

"One of our hero mujahedeen carried out the brave operation in Kfar Saba which resulted in one killed and four injured from the enemy soldiers and the Soviet settlers," the leaflet said.

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"One of our hero

North Koreans said to be sending missiles to Syria

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — U.S. officials have met with North Korean diplomats in Peking amid reports that a North Korean freighter is heading for Syria with sophisticated missiles and other equipment.

The State Department refused comment on report about the reported \$100 million military cargo but said it would view any such arms transfer with "great concern."

The New York Times said Friday that American intelligence agencies are following the progress of the vessel, which reportedly is carrying Scud-C missiles.

The Scud-C is a longer range version of the Soviet-designed weapons used by Iraq in the Gulf war.

State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said the administration does not discuss reports based on intelligence information.

Other officials said, however, that U.S. and North Korean diplomats met Friday in Peking, which has been the contact point for the two sides since 1988. The

meeting was the 19th since the contacts began. North Korea is one of a handful of countries with which the United States does not have diplomatic relations.

It could not be determined whether the reported missile shipment was a subject of discussion at the Peking meeting.

Ms. Tutwiler said Syria has had Scud missiles in its arsenal for years, and the United States believes the Syrians are trying to procure more, including from North Korea.

"The United States feels very strongly about proliferation of surface-to-surface missiles, particularly in the Middle East," she said.

"The dangers of Scud missiles in the Middle East region have been amply demonstrated during the past Gulf war. We have made known our views on this subject to all potential suppliers of such weapons, including the North Koreans."

The Times report said the freighter, called the Dae Hung Ho, was loaded with missile manufacturing equipment as well

as the missiles.

The cargo apparently was part of a deal involving missiles, launchers and technology to build a missile plant in Syria, officials told the Times.

Last year, Syria acquired 30 of the missiles from North Korea, the paper said.

The Scud-Cs are believed to have a range of about 500 kilometres — greater than the Iraqi Scud-Bs fired at Saudi Arabia and Israel.

Israeli officials urged the United States to stop delivery, the newspaper said.

North Korea is making its second attempt to deliver the shipment, it added. Last summer, a ship set out for Syria with the same cargo but turned several months later after news reports identified the cargo, Egypt barred it from the Suez Canal, and Israel hinted it would attack the ship.

China sanctions eased

The U.S. said on Friday it was

lifting some sanctions on China imposed because of evidence Peking was supplying missiles to Syria and Pakistan.

The sanctions were announced last June and prevented U.S. companies from going ahead with plans to provide China with \$30 million worth of high-speed computers and workstations. They also banned the transfer of missile technology between the two countries and the export of U.S. satellites.

The State Department said in a statement the sanctions were being lifted because China had promised to abide by the missile technology control regime, which aims to restrict the spread of advanced missile technology and weaponry.

The decision drew immediate criticism from human rights organisations and from Senate Democratic leader George Mitchell, long a critic of President George Bush's China policies.

The United States has been pressing China for two years not to proceed with plans to sell intermediate-range ballistic mis-

siles to Syria, Pakistan or other countries.

"Our action comes following receipt of a letter on February 1 from Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen... (which) confirmed that China will abide by mtr guidelines and parameters," the statement said.

Spokeswoman Tutwiler said China's commitment "is an important step forward in securing Chinese support for ballistic missile nonproliferation."

These specific sanctions were separate from those imposed by Washington on China following the 1989 massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators in and around Peking's Tiananmen Square.

The State Department said Washington would continue to monitor carefully all Chinese missile or technology sales and would itself deny missile technology to China.

The Bush administration's policy of keeping high-level channels open to China has been the source of constant criticism by Democrats in Congress.

Denmark protests Rushdie decree

COPENHAGEN (R) — Denmark has attacked an Islamic death decree against British author Salman Rushdie as a breach of basic human rights.

Iraq's late spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, said three years ago that Mr. Rushdie had to die for alleged blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad in his novel "The Satanic Verses."

"The decree is in conflict with normal humanitarian principles and breaches the principles that govern relations between sovereign states," Prime Minister Poul Schluter said in a statement published in Danish newspapers on Saturday.

Denmark would continue to stress the importance of human rights and the right to freedom of expression in its contacts with Iran, Mr. Schluter said.

Mr. Schluter said closer international ties brought down into contact with traditions and views which were alien to them but must be respected.

"But the death sentence on Rushdie goes far beyond this, it is at odds with the most basic principles of human rights," he said.

Mr. Rushdie, who has had to live in hiding protected by police since the edict, urged Britain and other European nations last week to put pressure on Iran to lift the death sentence.

Several hundred people attended a meeting in Copenhagen last week called by the Danish branch of the international writers' group Pen to protest against the death threat.

The daily paper Politiken said it has collected several hundred signatures supporting its campaign to have the issue raised at the U.N. General Assembly and to cut off cultural contacts with Iran until the threat is lifted.

A group of Danish parliamentarians also plans to hand the Iranian embassy an appeal urging respect for Mr. Rushdie's right to proper legal procedures and freedom of expression.

Rushdie plans to remarry

Mr. Rushdie, whose second marriage collapsed after he was forced into hiding by the death threat, plans to remarry soon, sources close to the author said Friday.

British news reports said Mr. Rushdie's future wife is a poet. Scotland Yard asked that her name not be released for security reasons.

U.N. envoy starts arms talks in Iraq

BAGHDAD (R) — The head of a U.N. commission set up to strip Iraq of its most lethal weapons has held preliminary talks with Iraqi officials to persuade them to cooperate fully with U.N. plans.

Rolf Ekeus, head of the U.N.'s special commission on Iraq, met Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mohammed Saeed Al Sahaf Friday night, shortly after arriving for a three-day visit.

"I had talks with Al Sahaf last night and expected to see the foreign minister and prime minister today or Sunday," Mr. Ekeus told Reuters.

He said his mission was to "drive home" to Iraq the need for Baghdad to comply with U.N. plans, drawn up under the Gulf war ceasefire, to seek out and destroy any nuclear, biological, chemical or ballistic weapons Iraq might have.

Iraq maintains that it has given U.N. weapons inspectors full cooperation and sees the Ekeus visit as crucial to its campaign to get lifted an 18-month-old trade blockade imposed in response to its invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

But the Security Council accused Iraq on Wednesday of obstructing the U.N. plans after a series of diplomatic skirmishes between Baghdad and New York and periodic clashes between Ira-

qi officials and visiting weapons inspectors.

It warned of "serious consequences" if Iraq failed to cooperate and sent Mr. Ekeus to Baghdad for his third round of talks with the government to seek full Iraqi compliance.

The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Thomas Pickering, accused Baghdad of treating the U.N. plans to disarm Iraq with "appalling disdain."

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Hamza Al Zubeidi or his deputy, Tareq Aziz, is due to go to the United Nations next month to press for the lifting of the sanctions, which bar Iraq from exporting oil or importing anything except food and drugs.

Mr. Ekeus will press Iraqi officials to drop objections to U.N. monitoring of current Iraqi weapons programmes. Baghdad has refused, saying this is interference in its sovereignty.

The U.N. envoy says it makes no sense to scrap Iraq's Gulf war Scud missiles, chemical munitions and nuclear weapons research programmes if Iraq is replacing them with new weapons.

Foreign Ministry officials said they expected Mr. Ekeus to hold talks with Foreign Minister Ahmad Hussein Al Khudayer on Saturday but the timing was not known.

U.S. accuses Sudan of creating new crisis

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The United States Friday accused Sudan of driving 400,000 people of gunpoint from shanty towns around Khartoum into the desert and demanding they convert to Islam in order to get food and water.

"The government of Khartoum has bulldozed the homes of about 400,000 people over the last 90 days, but them into trucks and moved them out into the desert without any preparation at all at the sites they've been moved to," said a senior official of the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID).

"This amounts to a death sentence for the people being put on these trucks," Andrew Natsios, AID's assistant administrator of food and humanitarian aid, told a news conference.

Mr. Natsios said most of those being transported were Christians and animists who had been displaced from their homes by the nine-year civil war between the Arab and Muslim north of the country and the African south.

Sudan is a vast nation that stretches from Egypt's southern border deep into east-central Africa.

The Sudanese military government under Omar Hassan Al Bashir has been forcing Islamic law on the non-Muslim south of the country and taking an increasingly fundamentalist line. It has also sought close ties with Iran.

Mr. Natsios said the displacement policy began in December. Some 3,000 to 4,000 people were being loaded on to trucks every day by troops with bayonets fixed and taken out of the capital into the desert. Repeated protests by the United States and other nations through diplomatic channels had had no effect.

With the hot season approaching, he said the child mortality rate would dramatically increase unless action was taken to provide the refugees with shelter and water.

Mr. Natsios said the Bashir government had refused to allow charity or aid organisations.

U.S. 'does not seek Kurdish state'

ANKARA (R) — The United States does not want an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq, Turkey's semi-official Anatolian news agency said on Friday quoting a senior U.S. official.

"We want a pluralist future and the representation of all groups in northern Iraq. We don't want an independent state in the north," U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Edward Djerejian told the agency.

Mr. Djerejian arrived in Turkey on Thursday to hold talks with Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin and other officials on the regional issues in Middle East. He said the United States would continue to help Iraqi Kurds.

Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel, who met Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani on Friday, said Turkey was interested in security in northern Iraq.

Mr. Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), was told in Ankara that Turkey would provide more humanitarian aid to Iraqi Kurds.

Turkey permitted a U.S.-led allied force to ferry aid to the Kurds in a security zone in northern Iraq after a failed post Gulf war rebellion last March forced about two million Kurds to flee into Turkey and Iran.

"We have expressed our concerns about the security problems along the border with Iraq," Mr. Demirel told reporters after meeting with Mr. Barzani.

Mr. Demirel was referring to

guerrilla camps in northern Iraq that are used by Turkish Kurds to mount raids into Turkey.

Iraq's Kurds say they do not support the Turkish Kurds' insurgency, although Kurds on both sides of the border have strong cultural ties.

Mr. Barzani was in Turkey to strengthen ties that were strained last fall after Turkish security forces attacked the Turkish Kurds' guerrilla bases in northern Iraq. Mr. Barzani's party said that local civilians had been killed and it withdrew its representative from Ankara.

Last month the KDP said it had decided to appoint another representative, saying it sought to improve ties with Mr. Demirel's coalition government that was installed after Oct. 20 elections.

Rights group criticises secret detention in Egypt

CAIRO (R) — An international human rights group criticised Egypt on Saturday for what it called "temporary disappearances" which often led to torture.

Virginia Sherry, associate director of Middle East Watch (MEW), told a news conference the group had gathered evidence that political detainees were often held incommunicado for up to two weeks between their arrest and their transfer to prison.

It was during this period that torture often occurred, she added.

"This practice is systematic in the case of political detainees... and is an invitation to torture," she said.

"We believe people held like this can be considered temporarily disappeared," she added.

Diplomats say Egypt is coming under increasing but subtle pressure from its Western allies to clean up its human rights record.

Interior Minister Mohammad Abdul Halim Musa has said allegations of torture are untrue and designed to damage Egypt's reputation abroad.

Ms. Sherry and another MEW official, John Valery White, said they were breaking their group's normal policy and holding a news conference to announce preliminary results because the Egyptian press had misrepresented them.

The three government-

controlled papers and the opposition newspaper Al Wafd quoted Egyptian officials earlier this week as saying MEW had seen no sign of torture in prisons and found the only problem was overcrowding.

"Middle East Watch was not contacted by Egyptian newspapers that reported our findings," said Ms. Sherry, who visited six prisons during a four-week fact-finding tour, the first time a human rights group has been allowed into Egypt's prisons.

"Our findings should not be used by the Egyptian government to say that there is no torture in Egypt," said Ms. Sherry.

French draftees break 30-year silence in new film

By Patrick McDowell
The Associated Press

PARIS — Thirty years after France lost the war in Algeria, middle-aged veterans are breaking their long silence on the horrors and frustrations of a conflict that still scars both nations.

Their forum is "The War Without a Name," a ground-breaking four-hour film documenting the stories of 28 former draftees who fought the futile 1954-62 war to keep Algeria, which is in North Africa, French. The film opened here Wednesday night.

Directed by Bernard Tavernier, the documentary is the first to let ordinary privates and sergeants tell, in their own words, what the war was like — and what it did to them.

"I know this seems ridiculous after 30 years, but it's still upsetting," said one, Robert Donzelio, whose memories of a gun battle made him cry. "This is the first time I've ever spoken of it, even to my family."

The testimony is intercut with black-and-white snapshots taken

by the draftees during their two-year tours of duty.

The most moving photos are those of Serge Pygnerier. One shows him drinking beer with buddies on leave. Later, another captures him in a military hospital bed, his lower left leg amputated after a bullet ripped into it during an ambush.

"For us, the war in Algeria is still going on every day," said Mr. Pygnerier's wife. "Every time Serge puts on his prosthesis, every time it hurts him to walk."

Though countless books and news articles have been written on the war, few films have been made. France, Mr. Tavernier says, has long preferred to bury the war's painful memories — and ignore the men who fought it.

"They terribly resent the way an official lead blanket was thrown over this bit of history," Mr. Tavernier said in an interview in the newspaper Le Monde.

The film, released to good reviews, opened a month before the 30th anniversary of the March 19, 1962, ceasefire between France and Algeria's National Liberation

Front Independence movement. A civil war as well as a colonial struggle, the conflict tore the social and political fabric of France at least as deeply as Vietnam affected the United States a decade later.

France colonised Algeria in 1830, and generations of school-children were taught that it was as French as Paris. The war spelled the end of the French Empire.

About 2.5 million draftees — from a population of 50 million — crossed the Mediterranean. More than 23,000 died and 200,000 were wounded. On the Algerian side, one million people died, Algerian authorities claim.

In the film, the veterans recount atrocities and torture committed by both sides. Some express opposition to the war. Others vent anger at France for abandoning Algerians who fought on its side. Others show hurt at the shame, indifference or scorn that greeted their homecoming.

"Over there, we were proud to be paratroopers," said Cesar De-

bello. "We came back to France, and people said, 'paratroopers, torturers.' So I kept my mouth shut for 30 years."

The title "The War Without a Name" refers to France's long-standing policy of referring to the conflict as a simple maintenance of public order.

Mr. Tavernier contrasts French indifference toward the war's thousands of psychiatric casualties with the numerous studies made in the United States of disorders related to Vietnam.

"In France, the rules were incredible: For there to be a trauma, it had to be declared within 30 days after coming home," he told Le Monde.

The film closes at a psychiatric hospital, where a patient tells Mr. Tavernier, whose previous works included the jazz film "Round Midnight," of how he played jazz piano before the war.

Mr. Tavernier tapes the man knocking out a tune in the hospital's common room as dozens of his former comrades-in-arms look on.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

U.N. report hits Afghan guerrillas

GENEVA (R) — A United Nations report called on Friday for the release of all political prisoners and prisoners of war in Afghanistan. The report, compiled for the world body's commission on human rights, implicitly criticised anti-government guerrillas for limiting international access to their prisoners. "Political prisoners on all sides should be released unconditionally... all prisoners of war should be released unconditionally," the document declared. The report, compiled by Austrian diplomat Felix Ermacora, was based on visits to Afghanistan and areas of Pakistan where guerrilla groups were based in 1991 and early this year. Mr. Ermacora said the number of political prisoners held by the government remained stable at around 2,500, while the process of interrogation "still appears not to be devoid of ill-treatment." But he noted that while he and officials of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had been allowed to visit government detainees, it was difficult to gain access to prisoners held by opposition forces. The report said it appeared that high-ranking officers of the government forces captured by the guerrillas were treated in accordance with international conventions. But he said he was unable to find out how low-ranking soldiers were handled. "In addition, the fate of Soviet prisoners of war, which represents a particular international concern, has not been elucidated," the report declared. Moscow officials say some 300 soldiers of the former Soviet army, in Afghanistan to support the government from 1979 to 1989, are still missing — apparently held by the guerrillas.

India plans to seek Israel's help

NEW DELHI (AP) — India, which faces a half-dozen insurgencies, may seek Israel's help in curbing extremism, Defence Minister Sharan Pawar said Friday. "We are thinking of seeking their cooperation on how to curb terrorism, which they have mastered," Mr. Pawar told reporters at an air base in western India. Mr. Pawar's statement was reported by United News of India (UNI) news agency. It did not elaborate or give details. India and Israel established full diplomatic relations Jan. 29. UNI said Mr. Pawar ruled out defence cooperation with Israel to replace the Soviet Union, which was India's main arms supplier before its disintegration. Indian security forces are fighting Sikh separatists in the state of Punjab and Muslim militants in Kashmir. At least three other insurgencies for independence or autonomy are being fought by ethnic rebels in the remote jungles of northeast. In the jungles of South India, left-wing militants are waging a guerrilla war, saying they are fighting for social justice. More than 12,000 people have been killed in Punjab alone by Sikh militants, who have bombed trains and buses, opened fire randomly in crowded markets and massacred families after dragging them out of their homes. Muslim militants, fighting for the independence of the northern state of Kashmir, have killed hundreds of security forces in sniper and grenade attacks.

Nosair in prison isolation, wife says

NEW YORK (R) — The man acquitted of killing Israeli extremist leader Meir Kahane but sentenced to up to 22 years in prison for other shootings has been placed in protective isolation because of alleged death threats, his wife said Friday. "Why is he being punished because of these death threats?" asked El Sayyid Nosair's American-born wife, who converted to Islam and uses the name Khadijah. Speaking from a secret location in New York City, she told Reuters Mr. Nosair was being confined to a cell 23 hours a day and was forbidden to watch television, read a newspaper or make telephone calls to her. She said her husband, in addition, was not permitted to attend prayers at the prison. A spokesman for the state corrections department said the agency was unaware of any death threats against Mr. Nosair. "He was placed in administrative segregation for his own protection and because of the notoriety of his crime," the spokesman said. Mr. Nosair was sentenced last month to serve up to 22 years in prison for shooting and wounding a postal security worker and another man the night of Nov. 5, 1990, when Kahane was shot dead at a New York hotel. Mrs. Nosair said she was informed of her husband's move to a maximum-security prison on Wednesday from another nearby high-security facility, after the death threats were received.

Turkish minister to resign

ANKARA (R) — A Turkish junior minister embroiled in a row over the use of orphanage funds for expenses will resign from the government but will continue as a member of parliament, a senior official of her party said on Friday. Social Democrat Populist Party (SHP) Secretary-General Cevdet Selvi said state minister Gulseren Ileri, who is responsible for women's and family issues in Turkey's coalition government, was to hand in her resignation on Saturday. The Anatolian news agency said the SHP's executive council decided at a meeting on Thursday that Ms. Ileri should resign. Turkish newspapers printed pictures of Ms. Ileri and her husband on a new year's holiday at a lakeside hotel for which they said an orphanage under Ms. Ileri's supervision had paid the bill. Ms. Ileri was also accused of buying full-page newspaper obituaries of her father at the ministry's expense last month. On Monday, she handed over nearly \$30,000 to pay back expenses she made since Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel's conservative social democrat coalition government took office in November. Ms. Ileri, a pharmacist from the central Anatolian province of Cankiri, described the incidents as a mistake due to misinformation and her lack of bureaucratic experience. Some deputies of Mr. Demirel's True Path Party and its SHP coalition partners had asked for Ms. Ileri's resignation earlier this week.

Moellmann to visit Saudi Arabia

BONN (R) — German Economics Minister Juergen Moellmann will travel to Saudi Arabia and South Africa next week for high-level talks with government and industry officials, a ministry spokeswoman said on Friday. She said Mr. Moellmann would stay in Saudi Arabia from Monday to Thursday, leading the German delegation to a 10th meeting of the German-Saudi Economic Commission. He would also meet the country's economics, industry and foreign ministers. He would then travel to South Africa, where meetings were planned with President F.W. de Klerk and African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela and other government and union officials.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:30 La maison bleu
17:45 Géoscopes
18:10 L'écrit des Fais
19:00 News in French
19:15 Carnet de notes
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Empty Nest
21:10 Equinox
22:00 News in English
22:30 Law and Order

PRAYER TIMES

05:01 Fajr
06:30 (Sunrise) Duha
11:50 Dhuhur
14:53 'Asr
17:20 Maghrib
18:30 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifich
Tel. 610740
Assembly of God Church, Tel.
632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terranova Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel.
623541
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel.
628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
775261
Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel.
683326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.
811295
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-
Day Saints Tel. 823824, 654932
Church of the Nazareth tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

The Kingdom will be affected by a depression accompanied by cold fronts. Therefore, it will be cold, cloudy and rainy at times, with snow expected in hilly areas with an elevation of 1,000 metres and more. Winds will be southerly to gusty. In Agaba, it will be partly cloudy and scattered showers of rain are expected, while winds will be southerly fresh and calm.

Min./Max. temp. Amman 4/8

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Agaba 9/15
Deserts 5/10
Jordan Valley 8/14

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 18, Agaba 24. Humidity readings: Amman 32 per cent, Agaba 40 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Arafat Al Ashhab 602507
Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayyoun 620115
Dr. Joseph Imsh 741444
Dr. Mohammad Manaa 770560
Firas pharmacy 661912
Firdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asama pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 636780
Al Salam pharmacy 649475
Yacoub pharmacy 649445
Shamsoun pharmacy 637600

IRBID:
Dr. Ayman Abdul Hajja (—)

Al Sharana' pharmacy 275825
ZARQA:
Dr. Khamis Ja'bari (—)
Khalid pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630221
Hotel Complaints 603800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Complaints 777010
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 674155

Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 681000
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/232
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Akshid Maternity, J. Amn 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhus, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Samson 664171/4
Shamsoun Hospital 669131
University Hospital 645845
Al-Munasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Irbid, Al-Mudajjem 777010/3
Al-Badr

Officials begin talks on Jordanian-Libyan cooperation in health fields

AMMAN (Petra) — A joint Jordanian-Libyan health team Saturday embarked on several days of talks to promote cooperation in health related fields between Libya and Jordan.

The Jordanian team is led by Dr. Adnan Abbas, the Health Ministry's secretary general, and the Libyan side is led by Habib Naser, the undersecretary of health in Libya.

The talks will cover employment prospects in Libya for Jordanian doctors and paramedics, sending Libyan patients for treatment to Jordanian hospitals and launching Libyan-Jordanian cooperation in the manufacture of medical equipment and medicines, according to Health Ministry officials.

They said that the joint committee will review a draft agreement on these matters, which includes launching joint pharmaceutical ventures employing plastic and other raw materials found in either country.

At the outset of the talks, Dr. Abbas welcomed the Libyan guests, lauding the existing cooperation between Libya and Jordan in various fields.

Mr. Naser, for his part, said that his country was deeply satisfied with the rate of coordination and integration between the two countries. Libya already employs hundreds of Jordanian doctors and nurses and buys a great deal of its needs of medicines from the Jordanian market.



Royal Jordanian airlines officials Saturday kick off a marketing conference at the Amman Plaza Hotel

RJ officials review 1991 operations, set goals for 1992

AMMAN (J.T.) — Celebrating 29 years of operation, Royal Jordanian airlines President and Chief Executive Mahmoud Jamal Balqez inaugurated on Saturday the 27th annual marketing conference of the airline at the Amman Plaza Hotel.

Participants at the inauguration ceremony included airline area managers, representatives from 41 worldwide locations to where Royal Jordanian operates or has sales offices and other key departments.

According to a statement released by RJ, the objectives of the conference was to review the airline's traffic and revenue performances in 1991. In addition, the meeting discussed its operating plans and strategies, ways to meet the

increasingly keen competition in international air transport market and promoting tourism in the Kingdom.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Balqez outlined the status of the airline and its competitive strategy to meet the financial, marketing and operational commitments in the coming years.

Mr. Balqez encouraged the attendees to work harder with a sense of vision and determination so that Royal Jordanian grows to new heights and proves to be an asset to the nation.

According to the statement, RJ flew 802,649 passengers in 1991 and carried about 42,192 tonnes of cargo and mail. In 1992, RJ expects to carry 1,156,881 passengers and 65,931 tonnes of cargo

and mail on its services worldwide, an increase of 44 per cent in passengers and 56 per cent in cargo and mail traffic.

The statement also said that RJ has resumed its operating plans for 1992 to Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore as well as a fifth weekly service to New York and two weekly flights to Athens. The air services will also be increased to three per week to New Delhi and two per week to Toronto.

With this increase, the statement added, RJ will be offering 174 weekly flights in and out of Jordan, serving 40 destinations on four continents.

Royal Jordanian also plans to increase its revenues considerably from its sources

other than the air transport, the statement said.

The airline's Training Centre and Simulators, located at Queen Alia International Airport, attract trainees from many foreign airlines, including Europe. Throughout 1992 its Airbus A330 Simulator expects to be busy 18 hours every day. Its large and modern maintenance facility offers all types of maintenance and overhaul to many Arab airlines, the statement added.

The conference will last for three days. The second day will discuss detailed marketing and budget discussions between groups of officials. On the third participants will tour facilities at Queen Alia International Airport.

Plan worked out for employment of Egyptians in Kingdom, Kabariti says

AMMAN (J.T.) — Labour Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti returned to Amman Saturday, ending a three day visit to Cairo where he concluded talks with officials on the employment of Egyptians in the Kingdom.

Mr. Kabariti told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that his talks with the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower and Training covered the process of employing workers, ending with the signing of a joint statement on organising the employment of workers in the two countries.

The agreement provides for the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower and Training and the Ministry of Labour in Jordan to prepare a list of trades and professions required by the labour market in either country prior to importing workers to take up employment, said the minister in a statement

upon returning to Amman. Mr. Kabariti said that the two ministries are to be the sole authorities for the employment of workers from either side and all applications should be addressed to them.

The two ministries are also authorised to endorse contracts for non-Jordanians working here or Jordanian workers employed in Egypt.

The joint statement also noted that Egyptian and Jordanian nationals currently employed in either country without work permits to be allowed sufficient time to obtain permits to work. Otherwise, the concerned authorities would have to deal with them in accordance with the existing laws, according to the statement.

The two sides agreed that the Egyptian embassy in Amman and the Jordanian embassy in Cairo

would be informed of the names of those workers that have been ordered to leave the country for violating the country's laws to ensure that they receive end-of-service compensation from their employers.

While in Cairo Mr. Kabariti said he met with Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Mejid to discuss Arab affairs. At the start of his visit, Mr. Kabariti was reported to have discussed the Middle East peace process with Egypt's minister of foreign affairs, Amr Musa.

Mr. Kabariti was quoted by the Middle East News Agency as calling for a fresh start to end inter-Arab differences and embark on joint Arab action to cope with the magnitude of the serious challenges facing the Arab nation.

Allied ships continuing to harass, disrupt work at Aqaba, official says

AMMAN (J.T.) — The American-led embargo imposed on the sea port of Aqaba since the start of the Gulf crisis is devastating Jordan's maritime business and has so far caused losses to the national economy estimated at \$46 million, according to the President of the Jordanian Shipping Agents Association (JSAA) Tawfiq Kassar.

The embargo in Aqaba is unjustified and should be terminated immediately if the national economy is to be restored, Mr. Kassar said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The foreign navies have been closely monitoring shipping to Aqaba, Jordan's only sea port, and inspecting vessels, Mr. Kassar noted. Allied warships stationed in the Tiran Straits at the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba have enforced tough inspection orders since the war ended in February of 1991.

Jordan has been committed to sanctions against Iraq in compliance with U.N. Security Council resolutions, Mr. Kassar said. In the last quarter of 1991 and for the first time the foreign navies which have been imposing strict inspection on all vessels, especially container ships, banned the arrival at Aqaba of vessels laden with sacks of sugar and rice, saying that the sacks pre-

vented officers from reaching the lower holds of the ships, Mr. Kassar noted.

According to Mr. Kassar, in 1990 and 1991 the allied navies intercepted 84 vessels, 21 of which were banned from arriving at Aqaba, 38 were diverted to neighbouring ports and 21 exposed to harassment at the Tiran Straits and delayed from arriving on schedule, he said.

The allied navies demand that all cargo and containers on any ship heading for the port be accessible to inspectors, not just goods heading to Aqaba, Mr. Kassar pointed out.

Referring to the losses to Jordan's national economy, Mr. Kassar said that 20 to 30 per cent in extra insurance premium have been added on ships coming into Aqaba.

In addition, Mr. Kassar said, there are losses sustained by the Jordanian shipping lines estimated at \$9 million, losses sustained by the Ports Corporation, as a result of diverting vessels to other ports in Syria and Lebanon, are estimated at \$5 million, losses to Jordanian importers, as a result of diverting incoming vessels to neighbouring Red Sea ports, with an extra cost for re-shipment, losses represented in the delay of arrival of spare parts

and primary materials for the Jordanian industry and losses to many foreign markets that use to import Jordanian products.

According to Mr. Kassar Aqaba port started to restore part of its activities in the wake of U.N. Security Council Resolution 687 which allowed shipment of food and medicine to reach Iraq. He noted that a total of 1,054 vessels of all kinds docked at Aqaba in 1991 unloading goods of nearly 5.4 million tonnes in weight.

Mr. Kassar noted that Jordan was only letting food, medicines and other humanitarian supplies to reach Iraq after the U.N. had eased the sanctions. Before the Gulf crisis, 70 per cent of cargo heading to Aqaba was for Iraq.

According to official sources here, Baghdad has resumed its imports of rice, sugar and wheat via Aqaba, but the lack of funds to pay for more imports is keeping transit business at Aqaba low. In addition, the officials say the allied harassment was resulting in a shortage of raw materials badly needed by local industries, hampering Jordan's exports of phosphate, potash and fertilisers. Allied action is also slowing down other exports to new markets like the countries of the former Soviet Union, Yemen and Libya.

Former Prime Minister Obeidat warns of increasing threat to environment

AMMAN (J.T.) — Speakers at a three-day symposium on the condition of the environment and air pollution in Jordan called for speedy measures to deal with the pollution threatening the air, soil and water in the Kingdom.

The symposium, organised jointly by the Jordanian Society for the Control of Environmental Pollution and the Goethe Institute in Amman, was addressed by former Prime Minister and Society President Ahmad Obeidat, who called on the concerned authorities to take serious steps for the protection of the environment from pollution.

Addressing the opening session, Mr. Obeidat stressed the need for developed measures to stem atmospheric pollution and control the quality of air through closer cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and with other specialised international agencies.

With the emergence of more industrial projects in the Kingdom, the chance for a polluted atmosphere increases, warned Mr. Obeidat. He said this situation calls for upgrading and boosting public awareness in view of the dangers involved in air

pollution, which is detrimental to human, plant and animal life.

Mr. Obeidat mentioned in particular the pollution caused to the atmosphere from the cement industry, the phosphate mines, the thermal power stations and the petroleum refinery stations in Jordan.

His views and warning were echoed by Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Abdul Razzak Tabeishat, who noted that the second half of the present century witnessed an imbalance in nature and the earth atmosphere.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King congratulates Qatari leader

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday sent a cable to the Emir of Qatar, Prince Khalifa Bin-Hamad Al-Thani, to congratulate him in his name and on behalf of the Jordanian people and government on the occasion of his accession to the throne. King Hussein wished Prince Khalifa continued good health and happiness and the Qatari people further progress and prosperity.

Minister meets Egyptian, Lebanese ambassadors

AMMAN (Petra) — Industry and Trade Ministers Abdullah Ensour met Saturday with the Egyptian ambassador to Jordan. Discussion at the meeting centred on ways of enhancing Jordanian-Egyptian cooperation in economic and commercial fields. Dr. Ensour also met with the Lebanese ambassador in Amman and discussed with him economic and commercial relations between Jordan and Lebanon and ways of promoting them.

Australian art prize features Iraq

AMMAN (J.T.) — A major Australian art prize for painting, the Sulman Prize, has been awarded this year to the Australian artist, Kevin Connor, for a painting entitled "Najaf Iraq June 1991." The painting was described by the artist as his reaction to the destruction of the City of Najaf in the civil war which followed the 1991 Gulf war.

Mr. Connor visited Najaf and other locations in Iraq in June 1991, and witnessed the destruction resulting from the conflict. The lower part of his painting shows the phantoms of those who died in the fighting. The oil painting was selected from over 500 entries for the annual award. Mr. Connor visited Jordan in the course of his visit to Iraq, and met several prominent members of the Jordanian artistic community.

British official due today

AMMAN (J.T.) — The permanent undersecretary of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Sir David Gilmore, will arrive in Jordan today as part of a tour of the Middle East. He will be meeting His Majesty King Hussein and the prime minister for talks on a range of bilateral and regional subjects.

Ministerial delegation leaves for Syria

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation representing the Ministry of Education left Amman for Damascus Saturday on a week-long visit to Syria. During its stay there, the delegation will meet with Syrian officials and will visit educational institutions to get acquainted with the Syrian educational experiment. The visit comes within the framework of the continuous cooperation between Jordan and Syria and in implementation of the cultural cooperation programme signed between the two countries.

Snow, rain expected today and Monday, Abanda says

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan is in for more heavy rain and snow in the next two days with temperatures dropping to zero Celsius, according to the Department of Meteorology Saturday.

A cold depression is expected to affect Jordan this morning, causing noticeable drop in temperatures and bringing rain with high winds blowing at the speed of 80 kms an hour, department Director Ali Abanda said.

He said that as of this evening and Monday morning, snow will start falling on highlands rising above sea level by 1,100 metres, gradually extending to highlands 700 metres above sea level. Mr. Abanda said that high winds will continue as the temperatures continue to drop and snow would continue to fall until Tuesday evening.

Referring to the weather conditions prevailing Saturday, Mr. Abanda said that the Kingdom was under the effect of a depression with warm winds centered south of Cyprus causing a rise in temperatures and some light showers on parts of the country.

The last snowstorm shut down businesses and schools, disrupted communications and caused damage to property. Vast areas of

Jordan Valley, farmlands were flooded and most of the crops growing there, estimated at millions of dinars, were lost.

The rains and snow of the past two months have filled the dams in Jordan prompting the government to embark on the construction of additional dams.

Meanwhile, the Civil Defence Department (CDD) Saturday issued a warning to the public in advance of the coming storm, requesting people to take extra precautions.

Captain Nabil Kassar, director of the CDD Public Relations Department, said that the high winds will probably cause various hard metals and other materials to fly off roofs and to cut telephone and electricity lines.

He said that members of the public are called on to cover water tanks and to keep away from fallen cables and power lines. Residents are being asked to move away from low, hilly areas which will probably be inundated with water, he said. He also called on people to cooperate so as to minimise losses.

Capt. Kassar urged citizens to store sufficient food and fuel, to avoid going out in the snow and bad weather for essential commodities.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition by Spanish artist Saeed Esheiri at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Shaker Hassan Al Said at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Gallery (10 a.m.-5 p.m.)
- ★ Graphic art exhibition by Sadik Kwaish at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street.
- ★ Exhibition of photos depicting historical and archaeological sites in Jordan at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of publications by the University of Jordan's Scientific Research Deanship at the university.

THEATRE

- ★ Arabic play entitled "Who's There?" at the Royal Cultural Centre — 8 p.m.

CONCERT

- ★ Piano recital by Prof. Friedrich Wilhelm Schurr at the Royal Cultural Centre — 8 p.m.

CORRECTION

Recent articles published on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees have noted that the organisation's budget for 1992 was \$72 million. The amount is for the 1992-93 budget. The Jordan Times regrets the error.

Hello? Anyone home?

AMMAN (J.T.) — Telephone services to 17,000 subscribers in Jordan were disrupted Saturday for their failure to pay their dues for charges on local and international calls, according to an announcement by the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC).

The TCC has disrupted part of the services as a temporary step but intends to cut the service altogether should the subscribers still fail to pay their dues in a week's time from now, said the announcement by Ahmad Munes, TCC assistant director for financial affairs.

Mr. Munes said that the partial service disruption for the 17,000 subscribers means they can receive calls but cannot make calls. As a result of the measure, Mr. Munes noted, large crowds of subscribers who have been affected by the partial disruption queued outside the TCC offices for statement of their dues and restoration of full telephone services to their homes and offices.

The TCC is in the process of terminating telephone services of subscribers who do not respond to the calls to pay their dues and, in some cases, the TCC has referred the matter to courts to ensure settlement of dues to the public treasury.

Potholes — Evidence of poor planning by government

By Serene Haglala

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — It is a very challenging task nowadays to be able to drive your car down a road in Amman and manage not to go over a pothole. Those lucky enough with quick reflexes usually swerve their cars at the right moment but those unlucky usually find themselves with their cars in the pits.

The wave of bad weather that has swept the Kingdom since the beginning of this year has left the roads of Amman in shambles. Although the weather played a major role in destroying and cracking the roads, many other factors contributed to their quick and early damage, officials said.

According to Naïem Hudhud, a project manager in a contracting company, Hudhudshand Ltd, many urban roads are not well drained and have not been structurally designed to meet the rather fast city development.

"This is mainly a drainage problem," Mr. Hudhud said. "Sometimes roads are not built with proper elevations to drain surface water toward a specific

end." Echoing the same sentiment, Falah Al Amoush, an engineer and manager in the Road Construction Department in the Greater Amman Municipality, said the drainage problem remains the biggest enemy of roads in Amman.

"We are working hard at finding ways to prevent water accumulation in certain roads, especially main roads," Mr. Al Amoush said. "Yet, our main problem remains to be the drainage problem."

Mr. Hudhud said even in roads with somewhat proper drainage systems, two problems are still unresolved. One is manholes are not in the right place on the roads and the second is lack of continuous maintenance of drainage systems.

"When drainage systems are not continuously maintained, the system becomes blocked and water is not properly drained out," he said.

As a result of improper drainage systems, water remains on the roads and results in potholes. "Asphalt is not meant to stand water for long periods," explained Khaled Hudhud, a construction en-

gineer. "If the water is not drained immediately, the asphalt coating will not stay as strong or flexible as it is and will lose its stability."

Another problem that contributes to the bad state of the roads in the Kingdom is lack of future planning. Hisham Al Azzeh, Hudhudshand's contracts manager, explained that after the completion of a road, the road is dug again many times in order to install utilities such as electricity, telephone lines or water pipes and drainage systems.

"The digging causes disturbances around the area where the hole was made to install a utility," Mr. Al Azzeh said. He added that even after the installation is completed, the work done on the road almost always is not up to the standard of the road before it was dug.

Mr. Al Azzeh attributed the problem to the "cancerous" growth in cities in the Third World. "Expansion of cities in the poor world is not normal," he said. "And governments in their planning by extending the necessary utilities and services before building the roads."

Acknowledging the lack of planning, Mr. Al Amoush said

that this problem is a major one and is faced especially in Amman because of the speed of growth of the city.

Mr. Al Amoush added that special study teams within the municipality have been created in order to avoid the same traps when planning the construction of future roads.

Another contributing factor to the poor state of the roads is the improper repair systems. Mr. Al Azzeh said that when a pothole is formed on a road, merely covering it up with a top coating of asphalt does not address the problem. The repair should go to the limit of the failure.

Mr. Al Azzeh said that sometimes water seeps into the lower levels of the road and ruins them. So when repairs are done around a certain pothole, areas around it should be included in order to minimise any future damage.

"In order to avoid damage to the cars, and when the weather does not permit us to make the proper repairs to the roads we sometimes put a temporary asphalt cold mix to cover up a pothole," Mr. Al Amoush explained. "This is temporary until the weather clears up then we start

necessary repairs."

Mr. Naïem Hudhud called for the formation of maintenance groups that use advanced techniques and skilled man power. He added: "they should be well financed, managed and sufficient in number to carry out all types of maintenance including preventive maintenance, even before the damage is visible or developed."

Mr. Al Azzeh said many things should be considered in the future when roads are built. For a start, he said, the contractors of these roads should believe that maintenance is part of road making, and should allocate a certain budget for the purpose.

"Even if we pay a lot of money now, in the long-term we would have saved the money that otherwise would be spent on continuous repairs," Mr. Al Azzeh said.

Mr. Al Amoush said that this year's budget allocation for maintenance purposes is sufficient taking into account the situation of the roads following the bad winter.

"We have prepared a well equipped and qualified personnel to oversee all maintenance jobs," he said.

By Dr. Fahd Al Fanek

Jordan Times

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Contest in the wings

THE ELECTION of Yitzhak Rabin as leader of the Israeli Labour Party may offer greater opportunities for peace in the Middle East provided he leads his party to victory in the upcoming elections. Not that Rabin's posture on the basis for a permanent peace in the area is totally acceptable to the Arab side or provides sufficient hope for real progress in the staggering peace process. Rather it is the message that lies behind the former Labour prime minister's election at a time when three hawks were vying for the leadership of the Likud Party that is of interest to us here.

When viewed against the backdrop of the Likud elections where Ariel Sharon, the housing minister, was soundly defeated by both Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, the incumbent leader of the party, and David Levy, who came second, the election of Rabin is projected to strengthen the chances of the Labour Party to win the next national elections due to be held in June. The Likud had managed to stay on top during the last two national elections held in 1984 and 1988 respectively, basically because Shimon Peres, the former Labour leader, was roundly beaten on the two occasions. Most probably the Labour Party members who this time around opted for Rabin did so not because they reject the stance of Peres on the issues of war and peace in the region but rather because they have realised that with Peres their chances of turning around the country were indeed weak. Twice beaten by Peres's leadership, the supporters of the Labour Party's platform on Israeli domestic and regional issues, turned to the more charismatic former general.

The new leader of the Labour coalition is already on record as calling for a halt to the colonisation of the Arab territories occupied in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war after describing the current settlement programme as a serious impediment to peace in the Middle East. Rabin also came out open-minded on the issue of trading territory for peace, having expressed willingness to entertain territorial compromise as the basis for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict.

True, Rabin has dismissed rolling back his country's borders to the 1967 armistice lines, but then very few people should expect him to spell out in total clarity the final position of his party on the future of the occupied Arab lands. It appears though that Rabin is trying to show enough sense, compromise and flexibility to garner greater support for his political programme from within the various Israeli constituencies and at the same time lure the Arab side back to the negotiating table at a time when all concerned Arab parties have all but given up on reaching a solution with the existing Israeli government under Shamir.

With Shamir now competing with Rabin over the leadership of Israel, everything related to the peace process may have to be put on hold. That does not mean that the negotiating teams from both sides can do nothing but mark time. Rather, basic policy decisions will now have to await the outcome of the June general elections in the Jewish state. Meanwhile, the respective delegations to the Washington talks can continue to explore avenues for agreement and define the issues that will require fresh instructions from Israel after the political contest there is determined one way or another.

As for the prospective multilateral peace talks, there is every reason to continue them on schedule in view of the fact that by and large they are technical in nature at least during their preliminary stages. There will come a time when the multilateral regional negotiations must also await policy decisions that are organically linked with the bilateral talks, even though there are still many bridges to cross before the parties arrive at that stage.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE PALESTINIAN problem lies at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict and any move to settle the conflict without ensuring a lasting settlement to the Palestine problem will be in vain, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily. Repeating Prince Hassan's statement, as contained in an address delivered at a meeting in California on his behalf by the head of the Jordanian delegation to the Middle East peace talks, the paper stressed that the search for peace should mean granting the Palestinians their legitimate rights and enabling them to determine their own future on their own soil through a formula that would see an end to occupation and injustice, and one which can ensure permanent stability, security and peace in the region. The paper echoed Prince Hassan's words that Israel's concept of security collapsed in the Gulf crisis with the falling of Iraqi rockets on Haifa and Tel Aviv. It said that Israel can maintain a mighty fortress to protect its citizens by holding on to Arab lands with acts of intimidation, terrorism and aggression, but the Jewish state can only ensure that through a permanent state of alertness and without any moment of peace or tranquillity since there will always be trouble coming from the oppressed people whose lands have been usurped. The Israelis can enjoy real peace, said the paper, only when they comply with the requirements of the international legitimacy, implement U.N. resolutions and recognise the rights of the Arab people of Palestine.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour Saturday stressed the need for Arab parties involved in the Arab-Israeli peace talks to guarantee the minimum level of coordination so as to achieve gains at the coming Washington talks. Hawadeh Al Far'ah said that the foreign ministers of Syria and Jordan achieved some progress in this regard and the Jordanians and the Palestinians have come to an agreement on a joint stand at the coming talks, but without full support from the other Arabs, there can be little hope of progress towards fulfilling the Arab Nation's objectives from such talks, the writer said. He said that the Arabs seem to be at a loss and with the current differences marring the inter-Arab relations nothing is being done to support the rights of the Palestinian people.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

More jobs through less government

Unemployment at above 20 per cent is a major issue that no responsible government can ignore. Yet, the Jordanian government can do very little to alleviate the problem because the real solution of unemployment lies in new investments to generate the badly needed jobs. It takes JD 1 million worth of new investments to create 40 jobs. Since the unemployment figure stands at around 140,000, and assuming we want to reduce the number of unemployed to 40,000, or 8 per cent of the workforce, then the investment needed should be around JD 3.5 billion, which is obviously beyond the capacity of the Jordanian government and economy.

The capacity of the Jordanian economy to invest is around JD 500 million. This volume of annual investments can create 20,000 jobs, i.e., less than the new entrants to the labour market estimated at 30,000 a year. In other words, we have to step up investments by 50 per cent, simply to keep unemployment at the present level.

On the other hand, it would be extremely dangerous to call on the government as a direct employer to create jobs. Public sector already employs over 50 per cent of the labour force in the country, one of the highest ratios in the world after the collapse of the communist regimes.

The overgrowth of the government and public sector entities created a huge burden on the Jordanian economy. Public expenditure by the central government is close to 45 per cent of

the gross domestic product (GDP), before taking into account the expenditure of independent public corporations, municipalities and universities, which bring up the total public sector expenditure to 75 per cent of GDP.

When we try to identify the distortions in the Jordanian economy, the inflation of the public sector comes first to the mind. Other distortions result from this original sin, namely the deficit of the budget, the weakness of the commodity production sector and the dependency on non-Jordanian labour in agriculture, industry and construction.

It was therefore a surprise that the government should announce 8,939 openings in 1992, including 6,931 newly created jobs, as if the ministries were not already overstaffed.

Most of these new jobs will go to the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education; both ministries are about to explode with too many employees and unsatisfactory level of performance and an overhaul is called for.

At first glance, it appears as if the two ministries deserve every encouragement and support because the services they provide are vital for the people. A second look would reveal that that is not true. The state is not required to undertake all the health and education services, especially in the capital and major cities. The private sector is willing to take part in the establishment of schools, community colleges, hospitals, clinics, laboratories etc. if the government does not volunteer to provide most of these

activities.

We don't need to point out that the private schools are outperforming public schools from the quality view point, and that the medical service in private hospitals is much better than the service expected in the public hospitals. This fact is normally taken for granted. What people don't know is that public schools cost more than private schools, even though the higher cost is not directly borne by the pupils, and that the cost of a bed in a private government hospital is higher than the cost of a bed in a private hospital even though the patient is not paying it. Increasing the share of the government in providing these services results in higher cost to the society and lower level of the service. The extra cost is paid through higher taxes or inflation.

The expansion of the government's role in medical and educational services was meaningful when these services were not sufficiently available to the public. The only justification now is that the poor cannot afford private schools and hospitals. This is true, but not all the Jordanian people are poor. A substantial portion can deal with the private sector and relieve the government from carrying the full load.

Creating more jobs in the civil service is a mistake. It worsens distortions in the economy. The reduction of the size of the two ministries of health and education by, say, 20 per cent would result in improving their performance and giving the private sector a chance to participate in the burden.

AI concerned about Israeli use of torture and killing of Palestinian administrative detainees

Following is the oral statement, issued on Jan. 29, 1992, by Amnesty International to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on the Israeli occupied territories.

The seriousness of the human rights violations in the Israeli occupied territories has not changed since the beginning of the Palestinian intifada in December 1987, although the scale of such violations has varied.

In recent years AI has drawn attention, including before this commission, to arbitrary killings of civilians, widespread punitive beatings and unfair trials before military courts. In this statement, AI wishes to focus on two areas of continuing serious concern: the use of torture or ill-treatment during interrogation and the use of administrative detention.

The Israeli authorities in the occupied territories systematically use interrogation practices which clearly amount to torture or ill-treatment. Methods include beatings all over the body, often concentrated on sensitive areas such as the genitals; hooding with dirty sacks; sleep and food deprivation while held in solitary confinement; prolonged shackling in painful positions; and confinement in small, dark cells known as "closets" or, when kept cold, "refrigerators".

Under the Israeli military justice system in the occupied territories, detainees' access to judges is routinely withheld for 18 days, and access to lawyers and family for much longer periods. Judges appear reluctant to order investigations into allegations of torture or ill-treatment made by defendants in court. Prosecutors and judges also place pressure on defendants to accept a plea bargain rather than ask for an investigation of allegations of torture or ill-treatment and continue with a full trial. These shortcomings of the Israeli justice system in the

occupied territories clearly facilitate the infliction of torture or ill-treatment.

Following the publication in October 1987 of the report of the Landau Commission of Inquiry into the methods of investigation of the General Security Service, official secret guidelines for interrogators were adopted. In its report, the commission said that methods of interrogation may include "the exertion of moderate measure of physical pressure". The commission stressed that "the pressure must never reach the level of physical torture or

"Amnesty International believes that urgent measures of redress are needed. The Israeli government should demonstrate that the official secret guidelines on the use of 'pressure' during interrogation are consistent with the international legal prohibition of torture and ill-treatment."

malreatment". However, it clearly endorsed "slapping a suspect's face, or threatening him". At the very least such methods constitute cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and as such are absolutely forbidden by international law.

AI believes either that the Israeli government is endorsing methods of torture or ill-treatment permitted by secret guidelines on interrogation, or that Israeli interrogators are massively violating those guidelines in addition to the international legal prohibition of torture and

ill-treatment.

Following the publication in March 1991 by the Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem of a report on torture of Palestinian detainees, a number of official investigations were initiated. In May 1991 Major-General (reserve) Rafael Vardi was appointed to investigate allegations of violence against detainees by soldiers. In August 1991 he recommended that responsibility for interrogating residents of the occupied territories be transferred to non-military authorities. This was not implemented.

Three other official investigations into interrogation practices were announced in May 1991, involving the General Security Service and the Ministry of Justice. In a statement to the High Court of Justice in November 1991, the Israeli government indicated that one such investigation had found that interrogators in Gaza prison had deviated from the official guidelines during the period in which a Palestinian detainee, Khaled Shaikh 'Ali, was tortured and killed in December 1989. Two interrogators received sentences of six months' imprisonment each after conviction of "causing death by negligence" in connection with his death.

In another case, 'Abd Al Ra'uf Ghabin was accused of being a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and was detained without charge or trial between August 1990 and August 1991. He said in an affidavit: "I was interrogated every day, Saturdays excepted, starting on Aug. 30, 1990, until Sept. 18, 1990... During the interrogation I was beaten four to six times — on my head, abdomen, genitals — usually with a fist."

He also said that he was deprived of sleep continuously for periods of several days. The Israeli authorities informed AI that 'Abd Al

Ra'uf Ghabin's allegations had been thoroughly investigated and that it was found that "there had been no deviation from the accepted procedures for interrogations". The Israeli authorities also said that he had "retracted most of his allegations" and that others were "found to be baseless". However, 'Abd Al Ra'uf Ghabin has categorically denied having withdrawn any of the allegations of torture and ill-treatment previously made. AI is still seeking information on the details of his investigation and the "accepted procedures for interrogations" found to have been followed in this case.

Amnesty International believes that urgent measures of redress are needed. The Israeli government should demonstrate that the official secret guidelines on the use of "pressure" during interrogation are consistent with the international legal prohibition of torture and ill-treatment. Anyone violating this prohibition should be brought to justice and, if found guilty, punished appropriately.

AI welcomes Israel's ratification in October 1991 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. However, it is regrettable that the Israeli government at the same time decided, among other reservations, not to recognise the competence of the Committee against Torture to consider complaints from or on behalf of individuals under its jurisdiction.

Several hundred Palestinian residents of the occupied territories, including prisoners of conscience, are held at any one time in administrative detention, without charge or trial. They serve renewable detention orders of up to six months. Although a two-step judicial review of detention

orders is available, appeals by detainees take place weeks or months after arrest. Crucial evidence about the reasons for detention is almost invariably withheld from detainees and their lawyers, thus rendering the existing legal safeguards largely meaningless.

One such detainee is Sami Abu Samhadanah, who has been held in administrative detention almost uninterruptedly since September 1985. Early in January 1992 he was served with a deportation order. At his appeal hearings against administrative

"Amnesty International opposes detention and deportation when imposed solely for the peaceful exercise of human rights. It also opposes the detention of any political prisoner, including administrative detainees, without a fair trial within a reasonable time."

detention and deportation, the Israeli authorities did not make available any evidence to show that he had been involved in violence.

Amnesty International opposes detention and deportation when imposed solely for the peaceful exercise of human rights. It also opposes the detention of any political prisoner, including administrative detainees, without a fair trial within a reasonable time.

AI urges the Israeli government to end the practice of administrative detention. While welcoming the ratification by Israel in October 1991 of the Interna-

tional Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, AI views with great concern the declaration by Israel that it was derogating from its obligations under Article 9 to the extent that they conflicted with the state emergency in force since 1948. Article 9 prohibits arbitrary detention and provides safeguards against such detention. AI calls on the Israeli government to drop its derogation from Article 9 and to review the appropriateness and necessity of maintaining a state of emergency.

Amnesty International fully recognises that violent as well as other methods of protest have been used by Palestinians in the occupied territories. Israeli soldiers and civilians have been killed, as have several hundred Palestinians suspected of collaborating with the Israeli authorities. Many such suspected "collaborators" were interrogated and tortured by their captors before being killed.

Amnesty International opposes deliberate and arbitrary killings by political opposition groups, as well as opposing the death penalty and extrajudicial executions carried out by governments. It also condemns the torture and killing of prisoners by anyone. AI calls on those responsible, whether Palestinian opposition groups or the Israeli government, to stop such practices, which violate the most fundamental of human rights.

The future of the Arab territories occupied by Israel in 1967 is being negotiated. In this context, AI hopes that the parties to the negotiations will, in their endeavours, take full account of the words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world."

Recovery not discovery is Posey's advice for the summit

By Kelly Haggart and Daniel Nelson

LONDON — Among the growing number of people who fear that the forthcoming Earth summit might do more harm than good is Darrell Posey, a campaigner for the rights of the world's 250 million indigenous peoples. The June 1-12 summit in Rio de Janeiro, says Mr. Posey, president of the International Society of Ethnobiology, is unnecessarily trying to "discover" how to save the world from environmental disaster.

It is unnecessary, he argues, because ways of maintaining biodiversity and living sustainably are already known and practised by indigenous peoples. Instead, the summiters should "recognise and empower indigenous and traditional peoples, whose very existence is being destroyed by existing models of development."

Yet such peoples have only a small place in the official meetings, because most governments regard them as administratively inconvenient, embarrassingly backward and "politically irrelevant," says Mr. Posey. "It is ironic that those who have the most to offer will have the least opportunity to speak."

Until recently, it looked as though they would have no opportunity at all, because they wanted to be accredited to the summit as nations. Faced with unbending refusal by government delegates, however, most have now bowed to the previously unacceptable classification as non-government organisations (NGOs — U.N. Jargon for cam-

paign groups). They will be only a handful among the more than 1,000 NGOs which have been registered for the conference, a development which U.N. insiders herald as a breakthrough for the world body. Yet the meeting remains overwhelmingly "official" in orientation, so indigenous groups are staging an Earth Parliament to coincide with the summit to make sure their voices are heard.

It will have to compete for attention not only with the summit itself, but with an even bigger parallel gathering of NGOs, which is expected to attract at least 10,000 activists and lobbyists. The hosts of the Earth Parliament, the Indigenous Intertribal Council of Brazil, are confident that the uniqueness of the parliament will attract the cam-

eras and steal the limelight.

One of its aims "will be to forge new alliances between environmentalists, scientists, indigenous and traditional peoples in an effort to defend the biological and cultural diversity of the planet."

Until now, international attention on biodiversity — the enormous array of plants and animals, a natural resource of priceless value to humankind — has focused on trying to protect threatened species from dying out.

A global convention on the preservation of biodiversity is under negotiation, with the aim of having it signed at the Rio summit.

There is growing awareness, however, that the conservation of biodiversity cannot be separated from the maintenance of the in-

digenous cultures that know so much about it.

Washington-based Worldwatch Institute, "the often intimate knowledge of nature possessed by indigenous people is fading even faster than nature itself." More than 90 indigenous groups have disappeared in Brazil alone since the turn of the century.

"With the decimation of each indigenous group," warns Mr. Posey, "the world loses thousands of years of accumulated knowledge of adaptation to tropical ecosystems."

He is worried that decisions taken at Rio might make the situation even worse. His fears include:

— A biodiversity convention based on parks and reserves that restrict the traditional peoples who helped create and protect

the regions in which the parks are sited.

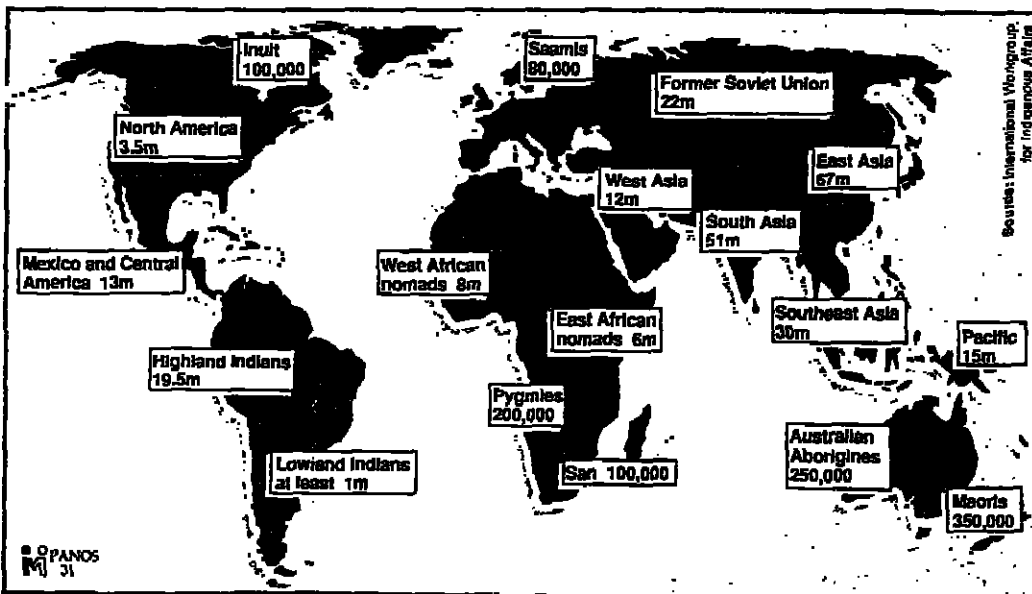
— Creation of huge tree plantations to offset global warming which fail to respect local peoples' rights to choose species, participate in planting and control of plantations, and to derive benefit from them.

— Establishment of "green funds" which will provide more money to the agencies, institutions, corporations and people who created the global crisis in the first place.

Indigenous groups will be lobbying hard at the summit's final preparatory meeting in New

York in March, both in the corridors and outside the U.N. building: a demonstration is planned by thousands of native Americans.

Perhaps their most important message is summed up by Jeffrey McNeely of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), co-author of a new "Global Biodiversity Strategy": "The numerous local cultures which are adapted to sustainable use of locally available resources may well provide the resilience which will enable our species to adapt to whatever changes the future may bring." — PANOS.



LETTERS

Beauty of the 'beasts'

To the Editor:

Thank you Mrs. Anabtawi for asking to ban billboards in Amman. As they are mushrooming in mid-town, I believe it is really time to stop this nonsense. Beautification? Everybody is Fifth Circle!

I have no idea if some of them may "beautify" a desert road but definitely none should be allowed within Greater Amman.

S. Salah, M.D.,
Amman, Jordan.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Delegates head for Washington

(Continued from page 1)

negotiators joined Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials at a meeting with Inter-Turkmen, commissioner-general of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which cares for Palestinian refugees scattered around the Middle East.

"We can't consider the issue of refugees as a humanitarian topic or a question of relief. It is a political issue, which involves the denial of our national identity and rights, and has to be tackled through an overall political settlement," Dr. Ashrawi said.

Payez Tarawneh, a Jordanian delegate, also expressed hope that the fourth round of negotiations would concentrate on matters of real substance.

Reaffirming Jordan's stand with regard to the peace process, Dr. Tarawneh said Amman was maintaining close coordination with the other Arab delegations to achieve peace on all fronts at the same time.

"We are facing the same problem and a common destiny and so coordination of our positions is essential," Dr. Tarawneh said.

"We are going to Washington under very critical circumstances as Israeli forces continue their incursion into South Lebanon

and maintains arbitrary measures in the occupied Arab territories," Dr. Tarawneh said.

He said Israel's latest illegal actions and arbitrary measures were manifested in the detention of two members of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks.

Noting that the situation in the Middle East was critical, Dr. Tarawneh said that the fact that all the Arab delegations are heading for Washington indicates that the Arab side is serious about and committed to the cause of peace.

Dr. Tarawneh said that should the negotiations shift to another venue it does not mean that the United States is no more concerned with the peace process.

The choice of another venue is negotiable, he said, but it has to be only a neutral country.

The head of the Palestinian delegation, Haidar Abdul Shafi, said that his group had submitted proposals for a transitional period and hoped that this question would be discussed at the coming talks.

He said the Palestinians were hoping that the question of settlements will be among the most important issues to be discussed since the continuation of the settlement programme was detrimental to the requirements of peace.

No accord on Israeli loan bid

(Continued from page 1)

settlement policy. Some analysts believe that the statement from Sen. Leahy, which was later toughened, may very well have been discussed, if not coordinated, with the administration. In its more or less quiet negotiations on the issue with the Israeli government, the administration is apparently seeking an end to all settlement starts in addition to an application of the deduction principle.

The apparent toughening in Mr. Leahy's position came shortly after another key Democrat senator, Robert Byrd (West Virginia), chairman of the full appropriations committee in the Senate, stated that assurances that the guarantees would not be used to finance housing in the occupied territories would be meaningless without a change in Israel's settlement policy.

"Receiving written assurances as to how the money will be spent, without any accompanying change in Israeli settlement policy is an exercise in building a paper dam," Sen. Byrd said in a statement as he released a study on Israel's policy of building Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

The study focused on the \$400 million in loan guarantees granted by the U.S. to Israel in 1990. It was prepared by the Government Accounting Office (GAO), the congressional agency that monitors implementation of legislation and the use of federal funds. In a reference to the 1990 loan guarantees that were supposed to be used in Israel's pre-1967 borders, the GAO report stated that "because of the fungibility of money, other Israeli government funds were made available for use as the government determined, including use in the occupied territories."

Sen. Byrd said the GAO report was "not reassuring" regarding the cooperation of Israeli authorities in providing reliable information on settlement activity to the State Department. He said the prohibition against the use of the \$400 million loan guarantee in the occupied territories had un-

fortunately not discouraged Israel's settlement practices. "In fact, construction activity in the occupied territories has continued at a brisk pace," Mr. Byrd said.

He added that the GAO report found that the guarantee programme, as restricted, did not influence the Israeli government's decision as to where to build new housing or on how much settlement activity to undertake in the occupied territories.

In what is seen as an even stronger statement, Sen. Leahy's counterpart, Congressman David Obey (Wisconsin), who chairs the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, warned that the proper way to deal with what he called a U.S.-Israeli disagreement over the settlement is not to simply deduct from the loan guarantee the amount Israel spends on housing in the occupied territories. "If anything, that formulation is an encouragement rather than a restraint on settlement activity," Mr. Obey had said in an apparent reference to the Leahy formula.

He said he feels no particular obligation to enforce the agenda of any set of politicians in Israel. "If we are to move in the teeth of taxpayer concern, we had better be sure ... that the (guarantees) are provided in the context of (Israeli) policy that is consistent with American interests and policy," he said. The American public, he said, has a right to expect that the U.S. government will not subsidise directly or indirectly the activities of foreign governments which are contrary to U.S. policy and U.S. interests.

Although this echoes Mr. Baker's words which he made before the House Foreign Affairs Committee earlier this month, in a sense Mr. Obey's position seems to go further than the Bush administration's position on the issue. While the State Department labels settlements in the occupied territories as "an obstacle to peace," Mr. Obey regards them as a "severe impediment" to peace in the Middle East.

Furthermore, the sub-

By Clare Pedrick

ROME — Barbara Bush may be there. So too may Sophia Qadhafi, the wife of George Bush's arch enemy, Col. Moammar Qadhafi. Queen Nour Al Hussein of Jordan definitely will. So will Queen Fabiola of Belgium, Queen Sofia of Spain, Princess Leila Meriem of Morocco, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand, the Queen of Tonga and the first ladies of countries from Ghana to Venezuela and from Fiji to Bulgaria.

"But this is not going to be another tea party," said Allegra Morelli, who is organising the gathering, due to take place in Geneva on February 25 and 26. The first ladies will in fact be sitting down to debate a subject close to their hearts. For two days, they will explain to heads of banking and finance institutions, development agencies and the world's media why it makes good sense to give a helping hand to the women of the developing world.

And at the end of the summit, the wives are expected to sign what has been described as a charter of rights for the more than half a billion poor rural women living in the Third World.

The idea for the meeting came from the first ladies of six countries — Colombia, Egypt, Malaysia, Nigeria, Senegal and Turkey. They decided to enlist the support of their counterparts around the world to help millions of other women pull themselves out of the cycle of perpetual poverty. "So far, we have had 56 positive responses," said Donald Brown, vice-president of the U.N.'s International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which is organising the summit. "We have invited the wives of the heads of state of all the member countries of the U.N., as well as the heads of various U.N. organisations and international finance institutions and certain special guests."

According to IFAD officials, the number of poor rural women has risen by 50 per cent to more than 550 million over the past 20 years. Each year, a further 10 million see their incomes fall below the poverty level. Yet, for a relatively small outlay, many of these women could not only drastically improve their own lives, say officials, but also the lives of their families, and ultimately, the

First ladies meet to stop cycle of poverty

economies of their nations.

That may seem a tall claim, say experts at IFAD's Rome headquarters. Yet research has shown time and time again, they say, that helping women to help themselves is one of the most cost-effective ways of combating rural poverty in the developing world. Women have already proved themselves to be prime movers in the development process, say IFAD officials. That is partly because they have a natural interest in bettering the lives of their families, because they are naturally energetic and dynamic, and because they are hard workers, often with good managerial skills.

Yet for reasons of culture, tradition or plain bad economics, women's contributions go largely unrecognised. "Women's potential to increase their economic productivity is substantial, but because their existing contribution is so little recognised, the institutions seldom give them the help they need," said Mr. Brown.

Dr. Natalie Hahn, technical adviser on women's development at IFAD, says she believes that with a little help from outside, women could accelerate economic development and help achieve food security in most corners of the developing world. "In most of the developing regions, women are the primary food producers," she said. "They are in fact the farmers."

Figures show that women make up between 50 and 70 per cent of the developing world's agricultural force and produce between 35 and 45 of the developing nations' gross domestic product. Many of them are also the head of household. As the economic crisis has deepened in the Third World, more and more husbands have moved to the cities to look for work, leaving their wives to cope alone. Some have gone to find jobs in other countries, returning home only once or twice a year. In the southern African states of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, households run by women are the norm rather than the exception. Their menfolk spend most of the year in South Africa working in the mines. "Forty per cent of men in Lesotho between the age of 20 and 40 work in the mines of South Africa," said Dr. Hahn.

Women also tend to be the custodians of what Dr. Hahn calls "indigenous intellectual knowledge of farming." "When you

have periods of great difficulty, for instance in Ghana a few years ago because of the economic crisis and Rwanda because of the war, it is the women who have the knowledge of how to expand the agricultural base or rotate crops to feed the family in the hard times," she said.

Yet in spite of the key role played by the developing world's rural women, they continue to be largely underestimated and ignored, say officials, not just by their own menfolk, but by the western development and finance institutes. IFAD officials are willing to admit they too have been guilty of glossing over women's needs in the past. "I cannot deny that even this institution when it started gave a lot of rhetoric about the plight of rural women, but failed, as I think almost everybody in the development business has failed, to understand the issue," said Mr. Brown. "In the past, it has been thought that if you contribute to a household, the women and men will benefit equally."

"... the number of poor rural women has risen by 50 per cent to more than 550 million over the past 20 years. Each year, a further 10 million see their income fall below the poverty level. Yet, for a relatively small outlay, many of these women could not only drastically improve their own lives, ... but also the lives of their families, and ultimately, the economies of their nations."

Experience has proved that is not the case. "Women still don't get their share of financial and technical assistance coming into the countries, considering their input," said Dr. Hahn. "Not more than 5 per cent of agricultural credit from multi-lateral institutions such as the World Bank and IFAD goes to women," she said. "And that's when women are doing 50, 60 and sometimes 70 per cent of the work."

Obtaining credit is a major problem for rural women in the developing world. Getting a loan to buy seeds, broaden farming activities or set up a small cottage industry is often a giant hurdle in countries where women may not even be allowed a bank account. With the husband away, the

problem is magnified. "In places such as southern Africa, the laws are prohibitive. Your husband may have to sign," said Dr. Hahn. "If he is away in the mines for eleven months of the year that is impossible. In any case, bankers tend not to loan to people who do not have a credit record. They ask: 'Do you have collateral?' 'Do you have a house?' And of course, the women don't."

Said Mr. Brown: "Even in countries where women have formal access to agricultural credit, the access is more formal than real, because illiteracy levels are higher among women than among men, because women are often hesitant about making demands and because bankers are hesitant to provide credit to women."

Often, women living in the rural regions of the developing world not only don't have houses, they don't have any land to call their own, even though it is they who work it. In many societies, land passes exclusively through the male heirs, and in much of the

portance of this latter concept. IFAD has already started projects which aim to help women get small loans for cottage industries ranging from handicrafts to selling agricultural produce. Officials cite the case of Nazma, in Bangladesh. At the age of 22, she was left with three children and no means of supporting them after her husband abandoned her. By joining a group loan scheme together with four other women, she was able to set up a small trading business, travelling once a week to buy merchandise in a village six miles away, and bringing it back to sell in her own neighbourhood. With the profits, Nazma has built herself a small house. She also has enough food and clothing for herself and her family and has plans to send one of her daughters to school.

Similar schemes are now working in a variety of countries, from Nepal to Lesotho. Money is loaned at an interest rate that is affordable, and because it is disbursed in the form of group loans, there is peer-group pressure not to default on payments, say IFAD officials.

Dr. Hahn has also run a seminar for women bankers, to train them how to cater for the special needs of rural women. "Another approach is to train male bankers that it makes good sense to lend to women," she said. "Even though women may borrow smaller sums, and borrow them for less time, it's a proven fact that they have a better repayment record than men. Whether you're talking about Pakistan, Lesotho or Ecuador, it's a phenomenon that's recurrent, because women are very good managers with money."

In some areas where loan schemes have been set up, the results have been more than just financial, say development workers. In Bangladesh, women's greater economic independence has been accompanied by a process of social change. In some communities, women and men have begun contesting the ancient dowry system and in a few cases have actually abandoned it. Some borrowing groups have clubbed together and used their profits to set up village schools for the children and met to discuss issues such as family planning.

But is there not a risk that all this will lead to accusations of trying to impose western values

upon the less developed world? said IFAD's Donald Brown: "We are not seeking to have the western world interfering. We are trying to enlist the help of the developing countries themselves. There is no doubt in my mind that once women have the ability to influence economic and family circumstances it will lead to a change in relationships, in a positive way. I do not mean to say that women will become dominant. But there will be a more solid basis for family life."

After years of living in and visiting various regions of the developing world, American-born Dr. Hahn remains convinced that there is less of a gap than might be thought between women of the northern hemisphere and those of the south. "In many ways, there is a lot we could learn," she said. "Some countries (in the developing world) operate a quota system in politics, so that in certain parliaments there are more women than there are in the U.S. Congress. Legislation on things like maternity leave is often better than in the industrialised world. Mali and Uganda both have female agricultural ministers."

By the same token, Dr. Hahn warns against underestimating the might and the will of the first ladies who have called the Geneva summit, and their determination to see it bear fruit. All six of the wives who originally launched the idea are people who have shown a strong commitment to social issues back home, said Dr. Hahn.

She cites the case of Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak of Egypt, who has worked extensively to help poor urban women in Cairo. Mrs. Maryam Babangida of Nigeria, who has launched a series of projects for rural women, and Malaysia's Dato Seri Datin Paduka Dr. Siti Hasmah Binte Haji Mohammad Ali, a doctor by profession, who, says Dr. Hahn, is very active in family planning in her country.

Like the summit's executive secretary, Allegra Morelli, Dr. Hahn is keen to put to rest the image of a genteel gathering of well-dressed ladies sipping tea — or even worse, serving it. "The first ladies is not a group of tea-serving ladies any more," said Dr. Hahn. "They are professional people, and some of them are very tough." — World News Link.

committee chairman who described himself as "a sceptical loan officer on behalf of U.S. taxpayers," appeared genuinely concerned about the economic aspect of the loan guarantee request. In that vein, his subcommittee organised a hearing on Friday to look into the issue. Some observers believe that although the Friday hearing was meant to focus on the economic dimension of Israel's request, the proceedings served to underline the extent to which the economic and political dimensions are inextricably linked.

In a statement distributed during the hearing, Mr. Obey said that while he recognises the U.S.'s humanitarian obligation to assist in the resettlement of Soviet Jews, there was no concurrent American obligation to provide aid which would facilitate Likud coalition policy on settlement activity. "There is no American obstacle to assistance to resettled Soviet refugees. The obstacle lies in the decision on the part of the present Israeli govern-

ment to put their settlement policy ahead of the need to absorb Soviet Jews," Mr. Obey's statement said.

Given the fact that taxpayers are "in no mood" to support these guarantees under any conditions, it is essential to "substantially scale back" the amount of the guarantees and to support the conditions which the administration is attempting to negotiate with Israel, the statement said.

According to Israeli Ambassador Shoval, it is possible that the Secretary Baker would meet again to discuss the loan guarantee issue. In what some regards as one of the most delicate Middle East related issues to be tackled by the administration, White House officials have added the burden of having to meet a congressional deadline for foreign assistance appropriation. Although it would be providing a guarantee as opposed to actual funds the U.S. government has to take into account the "set aside" fee for such guarantees, the cost of which varies according to diffe-

rent sources.

While the House has passed its version of the foreign aid appropriations bill for fiscal year 1992, the Senate has not been able to move the bill beyond the subcommittee level. As a result, foreign aid expenditures are currently being made under what is known as a "continuing resolution" which expires on March 31.

According to Mr. Leahy, a continuing resolution almost certainly means there would be no loan guarantees to Israel. The senator's warning Friday that time was running out for Congress to act on the loan guarantee request, suggested that he would wait "only a few more days" before acting on his own to bring the issue to a head in Congress. But one of Congressmen Obey's most serious concerns which he voiced during the Friday hearing was that the U.S. government had been asked to guarantee \$10 billion in housing loans to Israel but has not been provided with the needed information and facts to make a decision. "We're being

told (by the Israeli government) that this is a crucial need and that without it the (Israeli) economy simply isn't going to function. We are also being told that it is not going to cost us anything, and I think, to evaluate both of those assertions, we need to have a detailed understanding" of Israel's loan request and its economic plan for the next several years," Mr. Obey said.

"My problem is that despite some of that preliminary discussion, I don't think there have been very specific discussions laid out to anybody, and to ask Congress to simply approve \$10 billion in loan guarantees, the purpose of which will be made clear at a later date, in my judgement, isn't going to wash," he affirmed. Secretary Baker's appearance before the House and Senate appropriations subcommittees on foreign operations next week, in which we will discuss the administration's budget request for fiscal 1993, will probably be a welcome step by Mr. Obey, if not by many others.

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'Rouble famine' plagues Russia

MOSCOW (AP) — Russians call it a "rouble famine." Irritated and puzzled by this latest shortage, they jostled in line for cash at banks Friday, just as they do for meat at the butcher's.

Some even went to the extreme of exchanging their precious hoarded dollars for roubles, despite a precipitous — and unprecedented — fall in the dollar's value.

"No cash" declared a sign at the Russian Savings Bank branch on busy Tverskaya street in downtown Moscow. By midday it

had run out of money and was offering only teller's checks to funding depositors.

"Who needs your checks?" cried a burly man in a sheepskin coat. "I need cash now. Do you think I can find an idiot in any store who will accept your checks for anything worth buying?"

It's no ordinary run on a shaky bank that has gripped the young Commonwealth of Independent States.

The Russian government, which controls the former Soviet mint, continues to print roubles

at a startling rate. The amount of cash in circulation in Russia rose 20.4 per cent in January, Izvestia reported Thursday.

However, the demand for cash has risen even faster than the supply since Jan. 2, when President Boris Yeltsin freed prices and they shot up more than 300 per cent, on average.

Russia's top economic official, Deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar, said this week the government was deliberately holding down the supply of roubles to curb inflation and raise the value of the currency against the dollar.

Yelena, an unemployed single mother of a 16-year-old son, waited nervously in line at a currency exchange office Friday, clutching a small wad of foreign bills.

She was one of many Muscovites rushing to exchange their savings of dollars, French francs or German marks — either to raise cash for necessities, or out of fear that the value of foreign currencies will continue to fall.

"I need the cash to live," said Yelena, who declined to give her last name. "My ex-husband is a foreigner, but he still lets us have a bit of money now and then. That's what I'm selling."

Two weeks ago, one dollar was worth 110 roubles at the official exchange rate and 130-150 on the black market. In recent days it has tumbled to 70 roubles officially, and about 85 on the black market.

Other foreign currencies also have lost more than 30 per cent of their value, the first time in memory that the rouble's value has risen so sharply.

Sasha and Ira, both 30, nearly burst with relief after changing their hoard of dollars into roubles Friday.

"We've run out of ready money and need more," he said. "And why keep lots of dollars now, if the rate may go down to 50 or even 20?"

The cash squeeze has hit all the former Soviet republics, including the three Baltic states. Ukraine is introducing reissuable coupons for food and other necessities, in part to make up for the shortage of roubles.

Until perestroika, ordinary citizens were not allowed to possess foreign currency, and buying or selling it was a serious crime. All 15 former Soviet republics still severely restrict the use of dollars, and only a tiny fraction of the population earns them legally.

But many people, from wealthy entrepreneurs to retired factory workers, converted their savings into foreign currency as a

hedge against inflation before the Jan. 2 price rises. Now, they face enormous losses.

Until this month, the rouble had been sinking steadily, with no end in sight. The official rate per dollar went from six roubles in early 1991 to 30 at mid-year and 100 by year's end.

Some businessmen had predicted it would hit 300 before the end of 1992 — which would have made the average Russian worker's monthly salary equivalent to \$3.20.

Russia's central bank helped strengthen the rouble by selling about \$3 million at currency auctions in Moscow in early February, the head of the bank's exchange rate department, Andrei Knyazev, told the Associated Press Friday.

"We intervened to break the psychological momentum against the rouble," Mr. Knyazev said. "The exchange rate had become completely out of touch with the real purchasing power of the rouble."

Meanwhile, Russia's finance minister says his government needs to show citizens within three months that the economy is beginning to improve or Russia could face a "very serious social and political situation."

Mr. Gaidar said it would be "irresponsible and unrealistic" to promise the Russian people a sharp economic improvement across the board very soon.

"But we have to show the population that the situation is changing," he told American and Soviet reporters. "What we have to produce is goods in the shops — not even good goods, but some goods."

Mr. Gaidar hoped consumers would see better production and distribution of meat, milk and clothing within three months.

Strong supplies of other items in short supply, such as sugar and vegetable oil, will be far more difficult to assure in that time, he said.

The minister did not elaborate on the consequences if the government failed to get more goods into the shops. But he said Russians would not stand to see their purchasing power erode further through inflation.

Steady supplies of key commodities would inspire consumers to work harder to improve the economy, he said.

On other economic matters, the Russian government will move strongly this year to privatise retail trade, the food industry and the building materials industry to make the economy more efficient, he said.

GPA announces record profits

BUBLIN (R) — Guinness Peat Aviation (GPA), the world's largest aircraft leasing firm, has announced record third quarter profits but gave no news on when it might float the company on the world's stock markets.

GPA, rebounding from the damage done to the international aviation industry by the Gulf war, announced that its net profit for the quarter ending Dec. 31 1991 was 73 million, up 32 per cent from the same quarter in the previous year.

But despite the excellent results the company gave no indication on when it might launch a giant flotation on the London, New York and Tokyo stock markets that could value the brainchild of tipperary railwayman's son Tony Ryan at anything from \$3 billion to \$4 billion.

A GPA spokesman said: "This is the highest profit GPA has ever had in one quarter since it started in 1975."

Chinese department stores plan to open shops in CIS

PEKING (R) — Twelve Chinese department stores plan to open branches soon in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and some want to buy real estate in the republics of the former Soviet Union, the New Chinese Agency has said.

Two of the twelve, from east China's Jiangsu province, are sending representatives to Ukraine next month in preparation for the opening of their stores, the official agency said.

Chinese leaders, while privately expressing dismay at the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communist rule there, have been quick to set up trade and diplomatic links with the republics.

The Nanjing department store will invest \$2 million to open a shop in the port city Odessa to sell food, clothing, toys and household necessities, the agency said.

World consumption of spices continues to grow strongly

LONDON (AP) — The growing popularity of spicy foods — especially in the United States — is steadily boosting world trade in spices, according to a new study of the market released Friday.

The Commonwealth Secretariat study said world trade in spices now amounts to about 400,000 tonnes a year worth \$1.5 billion.

U.S. imports of all spices — especially pepper, chiles, cloves and ginger — rose once again in 1990, although their value dropped five per cent to \$355 million because of generally lower prices, the report said.

The Commonwealth Secretariat said growth in the use of convenience foods was partly behind rising consumption of spices in the United States and other developed countries. In the United States, the food processing industry accounts for 66 per cent of all spice demand.

Falling prices have also been stimulating global imports, especially pepper, the main internationally traded spice, the report said.

Brazilian black pepper was quoted on the London market at a 10-year low of \$1,100 a ton at the end of 1991, compared with \$1,850 at the start of 1990.

The Commonwealth Secretariat forecast that exportable production of pepper from the main supplying countries would rise to an all-time high of 163,000 tonnes in the current 1991-92 season from 155,000 in 1990-91.

Brazilian exportable supplies were put at 31,000 (33,000 in 1990-91), Indian 40,000 (25,000), Indonesian 45,000 (48,000), Malaysian 29,000 (32,000) and others 18,000 (17,000).

Japanese executives earn 1/3 of U.S. chiefs

TOKYO (R) — Top business executives in the United States earn three times more than their Japanese counterparts, a private research institute said in a report.

Presidents of major Japanese companies, defined as those capitalised at 10 billion yen (\$78 million) or more, receive an average 48 million yen (\$375,000) in annual compensation including bonuses, according to the Wage and Salary Administration Research Institute report.

The figure compared to 155 million yen (\$1.2 million) for top U.S. executives at firms the same size, it said.

"American company presidents can make their own decisions on their salaries and bonuses," said research institute director Kenji Yatomi.

He added that the apparent gap could actually be narrower because most Japanese presidents spend millions of yen entertaining on company expense accounts.

But even after taking this into account, Japanese presidents were still far behind the American executives, Mr. Yatomi said.

He said the salaries of Japanese company executives were determined after considering wages of their employees.

Huge sums paid to some top American executives in salaries, bonuses and stock options have become a controversial issue in a recession-hit United States.

Abu Dhabi puts up cash for BCCI compensation

LONDON (R) — Shareholders including the ruler of Abu Dhabi have agreed to payouts that may top \$2 billion for people who lost money when the scandal-hit Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) was closed down.

But creditors of BCCI said an emerging accord which was disclosed Friday by liquidators did not do enough.

People would get back only about a third of their money, BCCI operations were closed in many nations last July in a swoop by regulators who said they might have stumbled on the biggest fraud in financial history.

Abu Dhabi's ruler, Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan and institutions in the Gulf emirate are majority shareholders in BCCI and have now initiated an agreement on a plan to help thousands of depositors.

Brian Smouha of British accountants Touche Ross, liquidator for BCCI's Luxembourg-based parent company, said that if the plan were adopted, Abu Dhabi could inject between \$1.2 billion and \$2.2 billion to meet creditors' claims.

"This is the best agreement we could get," Mr. Smouha said after seven months of negotiating with Abu Dhabi.

Abu Dhabi said in a statement the plan was a "positive contribution toward relieving the suffering of depositors and creditors worldwide."

But depositors were disappointed.

"I approach these proposals with a considerable degree of



Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan

caution," said Adil Elias, chairman of the BCCI Depositors Protection Association which represents about \$1 billion of claims.

"Many creditors will feel that the Abu Dhabi contribution is not sufficient to justify the liquidators and the creditors giving up any rights," he said.

Liquidators were appointed in Luxembourg, Britain and the Cayman Islands last month when courts in these countries ordered the bank to be wound up.

Investigations of BCCI have led to allegations of widespread corruption, laundering of drug money and payoffs to political figures worldwide.

The Abu Dhabi proposals require court approval in the three countries where the main BCCI operations were based, as well as acceptance by creditors speaking for \$7 billion.

The plan could meet 30 to 40 per cent of claims.

Creditors could get an initial 10 per cent of admitted claims in early 1993, with the rest over a number of years.

Touche Ross said the alternatives were payouts of up to 10 per cent under a normal liquidation and many years of uncertain litigation against Abu Dhabi to effect recovery.

Under the plan, Abu Dhabi would meet half the cost of payments to creditors, with asset sales making up the balance.

Only creditors swiving claims against the majority shareholders would get payment from the Abu Dhabi fund. Those declining to give the waiver would receive a minimal amount from asset disposals, with no date forecast for payout.

Worldwide assets of BCCI would be pooled to maximise compensation.

Abu Dhabi would pay an initial \$300 million to an agent bank as soon as court approvals were received. The agent would pay the creditors.

Further payments of \$500 million each would be made to the agent in June this year and next year. A \$400 million payment would then be made in June 1994.

If worldwide liabilities exceed \$10 billion, Abu Dhabi would make a maximum injection of \$2.2 billion. If they fall below \$10 billion, the contribution falls to \$1.2 billion.

If asset sales exceed \$2.5 billion, half the proceeds flow to Abu Dhabi and half to creditors.

Report says boycott worsened black poverty in South Africa

WASHINGTON (AP) — Poverty among South African blacks was worsened by anti-apartheid boycotts and remains severe, a report by the International Monetary Fund says.

The report, "Economic Policies for a New South Africa," says sanctions against South Africa helped reverse a trend towards more equal incomes.

The report contrasts the first-world living standards of the white minority and the Third World conditions of blacks, particularly where large numbers of non-working women, children and elderly blacks live.

It notes that in the 1970s income of blacks was beginning to

increase.

"However, the reduction in economic growth throughout the 1980s — associated with a worsening in the investment climate brought about by heightened political uncertainty and the imposition of sanctions against South Africa — particularly affected black employment and wage growth," the report says.

It says the share of overall income for whites compared with blacks has declined steadily since 1960, but when population rate increases are factored in, inequality of income between the races remains among the most pronounced in the world.

Bankers deny Panama is haven for money launderers

PANAMA CITY (R) — Panamanian bankers have denied reports that the country was still flourishing as a money-laundering centre and said efforts to curb the problem were working.

"It's impossible to say how much money laundering there is. But there are a lot more restrictions and it's not as bad as before (when) drug barons would bring bags of money for deposit and nobody would investigate," said a chief dealer at a major European bank.

The United States invaded Panama two years ago to oust former strongman Manuel Noriega and clean up the country, which it said was a haven for money laundering and drug trafficking.

But some experts say the problem may have grown worse. A White House official told Reuters recently that money laundering in Panama had probably surpassed levels reached under Noriega.

"That just can't be. I would say the system (to restrict money laundering) is working pretty

well," said an official at a leading U.S. bank in Panama.

Anyone depositing more than \$10,000 cash in Panama must declare where the money came from, and some banks have required information from those depositing more than \$5,000.

Panama signed a mutual legal assistance treaty with the United States last year that allows the two countries to exchange financial information on suspected

drug traffickers.

U.S. officials said Panama was not consistently implementing the strict measures it has adopted to fight money laundering, such as freezing bank accounts and assets of suspected drug runners.

But Panamanian authorities complain that insufficient resources and the complex nature of money-laundering schemes make the crime difficult to investigate and prosecute.

Financial Markets			
in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank			
U.S. Dollar in International Markets			
Currency	New York Close	New York Close	
	Jan 20/2/1992	Jan 21/2/1992	
Sterling Pound	1.7521	1.7410	
Deutsche Mark	1.6444	1.6568	
Swiss Franc	1.4850	1.5015	
French Franc	5.5930	5.6275	
Japanese Yen	125.60	128.95	
European Currency Unit	1.2370	1.2355	
Source: Reuters			
European Opening at 8.00 a.m. GMT			
Eurocurrency Interest Rates			
Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS 12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	4.06	4.18	4.25 4.68
Sterling Pound	10.25	10.12	10.12 10.03
Deutsche Mark	9.50	9.50	9.50 9.31
Swiss Franc	7.50	7.45	7.37 7.25
French Franc	9.87	9.87	9.81 9.65
Japanese Yen	5.37	5.12	4.87 4.76
European Currency Unit	9.90	9.93	9.93 9.87
Source: Reuters			
Precious Metals			
	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	USD/Oz JD/Gm
Gold	351.35	6.75	Silver 4.10 .090
Source: Reuters			
Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
U.S. Dollar	0.6820	0.6840	
Sterling Pound	1.1867	1.1922	
Deutsche Mark	0.4114	0.4135	
Swiss Franc	0.4538	0.4561	
French Franc	0.1210	0.1216	
Japanese Yen	0.5285	0.5311	
Dutch Guilder	0.3656	0.3674	
Swedish Krona	0.1137	0.1143	
Italian Lira	0.0546	0.0551	
Belgian Franc	0.02001	0.02011	
Source: Reuters			
Other Currencies			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
Bahraini Dinar	1.7500	1.7560	
Lebanese Lira	0.0735	0.0745	
Saudi Riyal	0.18160	0.1826	
Kuwaiti Dinar			
Qatari Riyal	0.1818	0.1856	
Egyptian Pound	0.2020	0.2150	
Omani Riyal	1.7450	1.7540	
UAE Dirham	0.1648	0.1856	
Greek Drachma	0.3359	0.3600	
Cypriot Pound	1.3200	1.4750	
Source: Reuters			
CAB Indices for Amman Financial Market			
Index	12.2.1992 Close	19.2.1992 Close	
All-Share	137.63	138.97	
Banking Sector	110.55	110.47	
Insurance Sector	134.25	136.47	
Industry Sector	177.93	181.34	
Services Sector	154.21	154.69	
December 31, 1990 = 100			

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CIS commander sounds alarm on Karabakh

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Commonwealth Commander Yevgeny Shaposhnikov said Saturday that full-scale war could erupt in Transcaucasia if former Soviet troops were sucked into the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Marshal Shaposhnikov said there were persistent attempts to draw his forces into the bloody four-year-old dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan which has killed more than 1,000 people in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.

"The prospect of regular forces being drawn into military actions is a gloomy one. It means turning the conflict, which can and should be solved by political means, into a large-scale war," he said in the interview with the army daily *Krasnaya Zvezda*.

"That means bloodshed, mass casualties and destruction. This is the way towards an escalation of the war beyond the boundaries of the region. This is a direct threat to the security not only of neighbouring states but the whole world."

Moscow Radio said two Commonwealth soldiers and three Azerbaijani guerrillas were killed Saturday in a clash on the outskirts of the Azeri town of Gyandzha, just north of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Shooting broke out after the soldiers refused a demand to hand over their weapons and vehicles to the guerrillas, the radio said.

Fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave populated mostly by ethnic Armenians but administered by Azerbaijan, has continued despite a ceasefire call by the foreign ministers of both countries Thursday.

Commonwealth television Friday reported heavy rocket attacks on Nagorno-Karabakh's capital Stepanakert. "The town is on fire. Rescue work is being hampered by the lack of electricity, fuel and water," it said.

Marshal Shaposhnikov, who gave his interview to mark official army day Sunday, urged the warring neighbours to refrain from creating their own armed forces until the dispute was settled.

Azerbaijan, along with Ukraine and Moldova, has said it will form its own military, independent of Commonwealth Armed Forces, by taking over Soviet units on its soil.

President Ayaz Mutalibov, calling on his countrymen to unite, announced a partial mobilisation Friday, according to Russian Television.

Azerbaijani citizens age 20 to 40 with qualifications needed by the army would be called up, the Interfax News Agency reported. It did not say what backgrounds were being sought or how many men were affected.

Interfax and ITAR-TASS said the cities of Hovjaly and Agdam and a number of Azerbaijani villages in districts bordering on Armenia came under fire Thursday night.

ITAR-TASS said the attack on Hovjaly continued into Friday morning. It quoted Azerbaijan's Interior Ministry as saying the attack was preceded by several hours of artillery and missile assaults from nearby Armenian villages.

It said Hovjaly was heavily damaged and that several civilians were killed and wounded.

Raghim Gaziyev, chief defence officer in the Azerbaijani-dominated town of Shusha, told Interfax that the shelling of Azerbaijani villages involved tanks and armoured vehicles belonging to a motorised infantry regiment of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Both the Armenian side and the Commonwealth Armed Forces are denying the regiment's involvement, Interfax said.

Marshal Shaposhnikov earlier this week urged his forces not to get involved in the dispute and said he was prepared to withdraw Commonwealth troops from Nagorno-Karabakh unless there was a ceasefire.

While accepting Commonwealth members' right to build their own armies, Marshal Shaposhnikov criticised what he called "haste, unilateral decisions, pressure of force, and especially rapacious, frankly criminal and illegal actions."

Military and economic disputes, particularly between Russia and Ukraine, threaten the long-term survival of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) formed last December with the demise of the Soviet Union.

The tug-of-war over the 3.7-million-strong armed forces of the former union has aggravated a severe crisis of morale among servicemen, already unhappy at military spending cuts, poor housing and miserable living conditions.

U.N. approves deployment of peace force in Yugoslavia

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — The U.N. Security Council has unanimously approved the deployment of 14,000 peacekeepers to enforce a ceasefire in Yugoslavia and protect the population until a political settlement can be reached.

Advance teams are to be sent at once, and the first U.N. soldiers are expected to arrive in about two weeks. The force initially will be deployed for one year, although the Security Council has the option of extending or reducing its term.

The soldiers will be deployed primarily in three Serbian-dominated enclaves within Croatia, which will be designated U.N. protected areas. Both Croatia and the Serbs claim these areas, and it is likely their future will be the key subject of future negotiations.

"We are very happy," said Yugoslav Ambassador Darko Silovic of Friday's Council vote. "The ceasefire was holding only because everybody was expecting the peacekeeping troops to come in. It was very fragile and thin ice we were treading."

"Either this ceasefire holds or we will have another war," he said.

The resolution emphasised that the peacekeeping plan "is in no way intended to prejudice the terms of a political settlement — a reference to disputes over the sovereignty of the Serb-dominated enclaves."

"We hope the resolution

adopted today will facilitate attainment of a peaceful political settlement," said Thomas R. Pickering, the U.S. ambassador, who heads the Security Council this month.

The force will be the largest U.N. peacekeeping mission since the 20,000 man Congo operation in the 1960s, although an even larger force, of 22,000 to 26,000 peacekeepers, was proposed for Cambodia Thursday.

The vote had been postponed earlier because the United States and other Western members of the 15-nation Security Council considered the proposed \$634 million cost of the U.N. protective force to be far too high.

The initial estimate had been \$400 million to \$450 million. Peacekeeping operations are financed by special assessments of U.N. members according to their ability to pay, and the United States usually pays about 30 per cent of the total.

The force will operate initially on a \$10 million appropriation expected from the General Assembly. Full deployment will depend on a reduction in the \$634 million price tag, Mr. Pickering said.

Diplomats said Western countries opposed spending about \$132.3 million to build barracks for the U.N. troops, saying that existing army barracks and hotels should be used, with local parties footing the bill.

The Yugoslavia operation and the estimated \$1.9 billion for a

Cambodian mission would increase the total annual cost of U.N. peacekeeping to more than \$3 billion, compared to the \$700 million spent last year.

An estimated 10,000 people have been killed in fighting between Croatian forces, Serb irregulars and the Serb-dominated federal army since Croatia declared independence on June 25.

Yugoslavia's Tanjug News Agency reported Friday that Serb leaders in Croatia plan to replace their leader, Milan Babic, a move which would significantly lessen opposition within the region to the U.N. force.

Mr. Babic's opposition to the U.N. plan has put him at odds with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, his former mentor, along with an increasing number of Serb leaders in Croatia.

Mr. Babic and some other Serb militants say they oppose surrendering their arms to the U.N. troops because this would leave them defenceless before the Croatian government.

Croatia and the Serb minority enclave on its territory have posed fresh obstacles to the smooth deployment of U.N. troops.

A Croatian statement insisted Friday its laws must apply in Serb-held areas when U.N. troops enter them, although U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has explicitly ruled this out before a political settlement.

Hardline Serb leaders control-

ling Croatia's Krajina region ousted Police Chief Milan Martić who favoured accepting the U.N. plan and disarming loosely disciplined militia volunteers.

The decisions were a challenge to the U.N. Security Council. The Croatian statement said: "The laws and institutions of the Republic of Croatia will be in force in those areas under the protection of U.S. forces."

It reflected Croatian fears that a U.N. buffer force would allow Serbs to cement their control over the one third of Croatian territory which they captured during the fighting.

Diplomats said Croatia's uncompromising stand would embarrass German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who was due to visit Zagreb Saturday for talks with Croatian President Franjo Tudjman.

Germany has become the guarantor for Croatia's good conduct since forcing its European Community partners to recognise the republic in January, despite strong reservations by some including France and Britain.

The Republic of Croatia Friday submitted a request for U.N. membership, but asked that no immediate action be taken, U.N. officials said.

Croatian Foreign Minister Zvonimir Serparovic gave the application letter to Dr. Ghali, but requested that it is not forwarded to the Security Council yet, U.N. spokesman Francois Giuliani said.

S. Korea may take nuclear issue to U.N.

SEOUL (R) — South Korean President Roh Tae-Woo said Saturday Seoul would ask the United Nations to settle a dispute over inspection of North Korea's nuclear programme if Pyongyang refused to settle the issue, news reports said.

The nuclear row had become an international concern and "must be settled inevitably," Mr. Roh, quoted by the Yonhap News Agency, told reporters on the fourth anniversary of his inauguration.

"If this problem is not solved through the South-North talks, (we) should settle it through an international body like the U.N. Security Council," Mr. Roh said, calling for the North to give early permission for international nuclear inspections.

A presidential aide confirmed the press reports.

Pyeongyang signed last month a nuclear safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to let inspectors see its facilities, but has yet to agree to a timetable for such scrutiny.

The Korea Times earlier quoted a Foreign Ministry official as saying if North Korea delayed ratifying the nuclear safeguards agreement, Seoul would consider seeking the adoption by the U.N. Council of a resolution calling for economic sanctions against Pyongyang.

North Korea, increasingly isolated from its traditional Communist Bloc allies and with its economy faltering, has been obliged to woo its richer neighbours and the capitalist world.

South Korea and its allies suspect the North, the world's sole surviving hardline Stalinist state, is developing nuclear arms. Pyongyang denies the charge.

Western analysts say Pyongyang could build a nuclear bomb as early as next year.

Seoul's worries over Pyongyang's nuclear threat have increased. Prime Minister Chung Won-Shik said Friday after returning from a visit to the North that he did not think Pyongyang's stance on the nuclear issue had changed.

During the talks between the two Korean premiers in Pyongyang, both sides put into effect two inter-Korean accords signed last December on non-aggression and renouncing nuclear arms on the divided peninsula.

But Pyongyang, which earlier agreed to allow bilateral nuclear inspections of suspected nuclear facilities in the North and South, did not respond to southern demands for a timetable for the inter-Korean accords.

However, state radio quoted Vice Unification Minister Lim Dong-Won, who accompanied Mr. Chung to Pyongyang, as telling reporters Saturday he expected inter-Korean nuclear inspections to be held in late April or early May.

Yeltsin: Nuclear arms going on zero alert

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin said in an interview published Saturday that Commonwealth nuclear weapons targeted on the West would be transferred to "zero alert."

Mr. Yeltsin told *Izvestia* newspaper there was no need to target the weapons on countries which, with the end of the cold war, were no longer regarded as enemies.

He said the transfer to "zero alert" was being carried out by agreement with the United States.

"I want to stress that this is not a unilateral step which would disarm us. We are taking it on a reciprocal basis, first and foremost with the United States. The missiles will have a 'zero flight mission'."

Mr. Yeltsin gave no further details but added: "In short, I am no supporter of nuclear weapons. And if their final elimination

happens during my lifetime, I will be genuinely happy. Of course, that is a dream."

The four nuclear-armed ex-Soviet republics — Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan — have agreed on a single joint command of strategic nuclear weapons and issued repeated assurances to the West that their giant arsenal remains under safe control.

Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev proposed the "zero alert" in a speech to the United Nations in Geneva 10 days ago, saying it was absurd that the nuclear powers were still targeting their weapons against each other.

Former Soviet republics agreed Friday at a meeting with NATO to overcome divisions over the share-out of military power and put a key treaty limiting conventional arms in Europe into force within five months.

The Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty, widely seen as the cornerstone of stability in post-cold war Europe, was signed in 1990 by 22 nations.

But it has been unclear since the break up of the Soviet Union whether the republics would agree on how to share out the hardware limited by the treaty.

"They still have to agree on the details, but now we have a deadline," said one NATO source, who asked not to be identified.

A North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) statement issued after the meeting said all parties agreed the treaty would enter into force in time for a Helsinki summit of the 48-nation Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

That summit, designed to chart a new course for security and stability in Europe, is scheduled to take place in mid-July.

Aristide, Haitian leaders meet in U.S.

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Exiled Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide is renewing his quest to return to power by meeting Saturday with Organisation of American States (OAS) officials and lawmakers cooperating with military leaders who ousted him.

As a delegation of Haitian lawmakers left Port-Au-Prince Friday, however, the military-installed government declared it would not accept Mr. Aristide's return or a proposed OAS peacekeeping mission.

Mr. Aristide, ousted in a Sept. 30 coup, and his designated prime minister, moderate Communist

leader Rene Theodore, met late Friday for more than five hours with OAS officials, including Secretary General Joao Baena Soares.

After the meeting, Mr. Aristide said in French, "I am the only one who is making concessions to put the country back on track."

Mr. Theodore said he would not have come to Washington if he were not optimistic about prospects for a solution to the Haitian crisis.

Mr. Aristide and Mr. Theodore gave no indication whether

their four hours of talks made progress in narrowing differences over the future of Haitian army chief General Raoul Cedras.

Gen. Cedras is the leader of the military which overthrew Mr. Aristide.

Mr. Aristide, now in exile, has demanded Gen. Cedras be jailed or thrown out of Haiti. But Mr. Theodore, a critic of Aristide, insists that Gen. Cedras has a valid three-year mandate bestowed by parliament.

Their differences over Gen. Cedras are a key stumbling block in reaching agreement on restoring democracy in Haiti.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

6 die in South Africa violence

CAPE TOWN (R) — Six people were killed and several were wounded, including mourners at a funeral, in black township violence in South Africa, police and witnesses said Saturday. Two men, armed with a hand grenade and an assault rifle, attacked the mourners in Soweto, outside Johannesburg, early Saturday, the African National Congress reported. Spokesman Ronnie Mamoepa said 11 people were wounded and rushed to a hospital after the hit-and-run raid which he said had been carried out by men from a nearby hostel. Police said they believed five people were involved and were investigating. Police said four men were killed and three wounded Friday night when gunmen broke down the door of a bar in Sharpeville township, south of Johannesburg, and opened fire with an AK-47 assault rifle. In other Soweto violence, police said three officers were wounded in a machinegun attack on a police station and a man was beaten to death with knobkerries — weighted fighting sticks usually carried by Zulus. A man was shot dead at Umkomas in Natal province, where Inkatha and the ANC have fought for four years.

Maltese vote in general election

VALETTA (R) — Maltese voters flocked to the polls Saturday to cast their votes in a general election dominated by the issue of European Community membership. Bright sunshine and warm winds after weeks of unusually cold weather on this picturesque Mediterranean island brought most voters out early and led analysts to predict a record turnout. They said the weather might even be a deciding factor in a contest where less than 5,000 votes separated the two main parties in the last elections five years ago. Then, over 96 per cent of the country's 250,000 voters turned out in an election which ended the 16-year rule of the Labour Party during which ties with Libya became uncomfortably close for many Western nations. Thereafter, incoming Prime Minister Eddie Fenech Adami of the Nationalist Party followed a more pro-Western line, distanced himself from Libya and applied in 1990 to join the EC. But the gap between the two parties has remained very small and analysts say the result of Saturday's election — due on Monday evening — is too close to call.

U.S. may buy some CIS space equipment

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States might be able to use a Soyuz space and other space equipment from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the head of the U.S. space agency said Friday. Admiral Richard Truly, the outgoing administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), said NASA was studying the feasibility of buying a Soyuz space craft from the Commonwealth and using it as an emergency rescue vehicle for the crew of the proposed U.S. space station Freedom. "We must do a thorough engineering assessment. It's much too early to say yes or no," Adm. Truly told a Senate Subcommittee.

Gates brings glasnost to CIA

WASHINGTON (R) — The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) came in from the cold when Robert Gates announced a series of sweeping changes including moves to declassify documents on John F. Kennedy's assassination. In a speech he said marked an historic watershed, CIA Director Gates announced sweeping changes to end unnecessary secrecy, boost accountability, release previously classified files and become less spooky. As an example, Mr. Gates cited steps towards opening documents on the 1963 killing of former President Kennedy. He said the CIA would cooperate fully in any government-wide declassification process. Other CIA files targeted for priority declassification include those on the 1954 Guatemala coup, the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion and the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, he said. Mr. Gates, sworn in on Nov. 9 as the 15th director of CIA, said CIA activities had been unjustifiably cloaked in "undifferentiated secrecy" from the agency's creation in 1947.

Pope visits Senegal

GOREE, Senegal (R) — Pope John Paul, speaking on this notorious slave island, Saturday prayed for forgiveness for the "horrible aberration" that the Christian white man had committed in his pillage of Africa. "From this African sanctuary of black pain, we implore forgiveness from heaven," the Pope said during an emotional visit to the island from where tens of thousands of slaves were shipped to the new world until the early 19th century. He denounced "the horrible aberration of those who reduced to slavery the brothers and sisters the gospel had destined for freedom." The Pope spoke in sombre tones during a visit to the house of slaves; a faded pink colonial building where slaves were herded and selected while awaiting America-bound ships. Now a museum, the two-story house looking out on the Atlantic has rooms where the slaves were sorted according to age and sex, shackled and kept for up to three months in dark, cramped cells while waiting to be shipped. They were forced-fed if they weighed below the required 60 kg (132 pounds) and then passed through the "door of no return" onto the ships that were part of a trade run mostly by Christian Europeans.

COLUMN

Japan's golden oldie twins seek Guinness record

TOKYO (R) — A debut disc by twin sisters fast approaching their 101st birthday went on sale in Japan, and their record company wants to find them a place in the Guinness Book of Records. Kin Narita and Gin Yanie, who recently found fame through a television commercial for a mail order firm, made the record of traditional songs along with a group of children. As it appeared in Tokyo record stores, Masae Takemoto of Pony Canyon Distribution said his firm planned to contact the London-based Guinness Book to stake the twins' claim to be the oldest artists ever to make their recording debut. The category is not included in the book's latest edition. Kin and Gin (in Japanese, their names mean gold and silver) were born in Nagoya, central Japan, in August 1891. They have a total of 10 children, 15 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

Gorbachev to write for New York Times Service

NEW YORK (R) — Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev is to write a monthly column for the New York Times Syndication Service, the paper said. He will deal with such issues as the future of communism, the Gulf war, relations between the Kremlin and the Pope, and his own relationship with Russian President Boris Yeltsin, it said. The newspaper said some of Mr. Gorbachev's columns will be run on its opinion page, the first one appearing next Monday. The columns will be offered to other newspapers through the syndication service.

Churchill's nightshirt to go on sale

LONDON (R) — An outside pure silk nightshirt made for British World War II leader Winston Churchill is to be put up for sale in London in April, auctioneers Christie's said. The cream silk nightshirt, embroidered with Churchill's initials, has a 50-inch (127 cm) waist and is expected to fetch £400 to £600 (\$700 to \$1,050). The burly British prime minister had clothes specially made from silk as his sensitive skin had an allergic reaction to other fabrics. Despite his large size and legendary heavy drinking and cigar-smoking Churchill survived to the age of 90, possibly due to his specific genetic make-up, scientists say this week. He died in 1965. A research project launched by the British Heart Foundation Tuesday aims to discover whether some people with an unhealthy lifestyle are protected by a "Churchill gene", allowing them to survive into old age against the odds.

Mom sentenced to second grade

MARTINSBURG, West Virginia (AP) — A woman was ordered to spend five weeks in second grade because her son missed too much school. Sherilyn Williams must join her 8-year-old son at Berkeley Heights Elementary School until March 27. The boy has missed 106 days of school in three years.

Sado masochists lose court appeal

LONDON (R) — An English appeal court has refused Wednesday to overturn the convictions of a group of homosexual sadomasochists accused of torturing, despite their plea that the act of violence had been carried out with consent. Five men had argued in a case supported by gay activists that they were unjustly tried and jailed for mutual acts of what was alleged to have been genital torture. But three appeal judges led by the lord chief justice, Lord Lane, held that consent to violence was no defence in English law. Lord Lane, however, reduced several of the jail terms and allowed further appeal to the House of Lords. Judges who sit in the unelected upper chamber of parliament from the highest court in England and Wales. Those who were convicted included an ex-schoolmaster described by Lord Lane as the organiser of a "torture chamber" and a lay preacher. "The effect of this decision is to criminalise a wide range of sexual practices," said Andrew Puddheath of Liberty, a civil rights lobby group. "It will provide police with the opportunity for further harassment of gay men and lesbians."

Poll finds unexpected strength for Clinton

SIOUX FALLS, South Dakota (R) — A poll published Saturday indicated that Senator Bob Kerrey of Nebraska may win next Tuesday's South Dakota Democratic Primary, with a surprise second-place finish by Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton.

The poll, by the Sioux Falls *Argus-Leader* newspaper, showed Sen. Kerrey in front with 26 per cent, followed by Clinton with 16 per cent, Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa with 15 per cent, former Senator Paul Tsongas of Massachusetts with 12 per cent and former California Governor Jerry Brown with three per cent.

Twenty-eight per cent were undecided.

The poll results were bad news for Sen. Harkin — the most liberal Democrat in the group seeking his party's nomination for next November's U.S. presidential election — because South Dakota had been billed as a battleground between Sen. Harkin and Sen. Kerrey.

The two men from heartland states which about South Dakota had invested heavily in organisation and advertising.

"This may be it for Harkin," said one political reporter in Sioux Falls. "There are reports organised labour has cut off its backing."

Mr. Clinton, who finished in a strong second place behind Mr. Tsongas in Tuesday's New Hampshire primary, had done some early organising in South Dakota but little else.

South Dakota will send only 20 delegates to the Democratic Par-

ty's nominating convention in New York next July, of which only 15 will be at stake in Tuesday's primary.

But the contest has drawn interest as a follow-up to the New Hampshire primary, and Sunday's party caucuses in Maine.

Republican President George Bush is not challenged on the South Dakota ballot.

Three quarters of America's voters say President Bush's handling of the economy is inadequate and almost half disapprove of his overall performance, according to a poll released Friday.

Asked if they would rather vote for Mr. Bush or for an unspecified Democrat, a majority of Americans said they would choose the Democrat, according to the CBS Television-New York Times poll.

The poll however showed that if Mr. Bush were up against any one of the announced Democratic candidates he would win the presidential election.

The poll showed Mr. Bush triumphing over Mr. Tsongas by 7 percentage points and over Mr. Clinton by 11 points.

It showed that 75 per cent of Americans disapproved of Mr. Bush's handling of the economy while 48 per cent disapproved of his overall performance.

The poll also showed that a fourth of all Republicans had an unfavourable opinion of Pat Buchanan, the Conservative columnist and commentator whose strong second-place finish in the New Hampshire Republican primary Tuesday stunned Mr.

Bush.

Mr. Bush urged Republicans in the U.S. south Friday to unify around his reelection campaign, but his upstart rival decided to "crash the party" with an appearance across the street.

"I come here fired up and confident, but I need your support," Bush told about 1,000 cheering people at the three-day southern Republican leadership conference.

Mr. Bush criticised Democrats for refusing to embrace the economic proposals he unveiled in his State of the Union Address in January and said he would veto the "nonsense" being crafted by Congress.

"I will veto it the minute it hits my desk," he told the partisan group that chanted "four more years, four more years" as he spoke.

Mr. Bush made no direct mention of his Republican challenger.

Members before Mr. Bush spoke, Mr. Buchanan met reporters at a hotel across the street and said: "This is about as close as we can get to the ... conference."

"We decided we would just come anyhow and crash the party," said the conservative television commentator who has never held elective office.

He said the Republicans might as well change their symbol from the elephant to the chicken if Mr. Bush refused to debate him or make joint appearances. Mr. Buchanan said he will make a strong showing in the South Carolina primary on March 7.

Mr. Bush received enthusiastically by the group made up of the party's establishment in the south, a generally conservative region of the United States and site of the next round of primary elections over the next three weeks.

"These next primaries are critical," Mr. Bush said. "I need your help."

"Just to be perfectly clear about it, I am confident of winning the presidency for four more years," he said.

Carroll Campbell, co-chairman of Mr. Bush's campaign and host of the conference, said Mr. Buchanan had been invited to address the group Sunday — but the presidential challenger said the offer came too late for him to change his schedule.

Although Mr. Buchanan stands virtually no chance of actually wresting the nomination from Mr. Bush, the size of his showing in New Hampshire underscored widespread voter dissatisfaction with the state of the U.S. economy.

According to interviews with New Hampshire voters who cast ballots, more than half of those who voted for Mr. Buchanan said they were trying "to send a message" to Mr. Bush on the economy.

The White House's failure to end the recession, now dragging into its 20th month, has become the driving force in challenges to Mr. Bush from both the right and left.

Meanwhile, Democrat Bill Clinton appealed for crucial black

support Friday, attacking the budget-minded policies of Mr. Tsongas, as the two frontrunners fought over the Arkansas governor's vaunted southern base.

Mr. Tsongas launched a television ad in next Tuesday's primary state of South Dakota, claiming Mr. Clinton and Sen. Kerrey would borrow to pay for a middle-class tax cut the country can ill afford. Mr. Clinton and Sen. Kerrey say they would finance it by taxing the wealthy.

And New York Gov. Mario Cuomo called for an end to the write-in campaign on his behalf.

Georgia's primary is less than two weeks away, and both Mr. Clinton and Mr. Tsongas were planning to be on the day as the state's Democrats held their annual fundraising dinner.

Black support will be a major factor in the primary, and Mr. Clinton made an impassioned appeal for the speeches before the Georgia legislature and at historically black Morehouse College.

"When I am trying to help the middle class and reduce poverty, with policies that will change this country, some have said that amounts to being Santa Claus," the Arkansas governor told several hundred students.

"Well, the American people don't need Santa Claus, but they do need a president who understands their pain, their agony, the real facts of their lives and will turn around the circumstances that have killed hope for millions of Americans," Clinton said.